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## A Primary Document Analysis-Centered Curriculum in a Residential Treatment Center

Jared Peterson Collette  
*Utah State University*

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2013

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A PRIMARY DOCUMENT ANALYSIS-CENTERED CURRICULUM IN A  
RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER

Jared P. Collette  
*Utah State University*

A PRIMARY DOCUMENT ANALYSIS-CENTERED CURRICULUM IN A  
RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER

by

Jared P. Collette

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree

of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2013

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## ABSTRACT

A Primary Document Analysis-Centered Curriculum in a Residential Treatment Center

by

Jared P. Collette, Master of Education

Utah State University, 2013

Major Professor: Spencer J. Clark Ph.D.

Department: Education – Secondary

This study examines the challenges and rewards of applying Stanford History Group's Thinking Like a Historian program in the context of a residential treatment center to better understand the necessary modifications and adjustments that would be needed to successfully apply this program. The researcher used an action research methodology, an analytic autoethnographic journal, as well as student work to investigate student successes and challenges in learning history through the use of primary documents. The findings demonstrate that students did not successfully apply historical thinking even after explicit instruction, extensive modeling, and guided practice. The author argues that low literacy rates, background understanding, and self-efficacy, as well as classroom behavioral issues and limited class time inhibited student success. The author believes that in this context, primary document textual analysis is not the best means to teach or learn historical content, but may be more effective as a means for teachers to demonstrate historical concepts, and for students to demonstrate and apply understanding that they have already obtained.

(113)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

A Primary Document Analysis-Centered Curriculum in a Residential Treatment Center

Jared P. Collette  
Utah State University, 2013

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Jared P. Collette



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There has been an enormous amount of literature during the last ten years praising the application of primary documents in the classroom. Most studies praise their merits without sufficiently recognizing the challenges of successfully applying primary documents (Cleary & Neumann, 2009; Barton, 2005). Most studies of primary documents have focused on the elite and mainstream students. None of these studies have included incarcerated youth. In this qualitative study, I examined the affects of applying primary documents in a classroom of incarcerated youth and discovered that it was very challenging for my students to learn and apply historical thinking. No professional literature I had read prepared me for the challenges that I encountered.

My essential research question was: What happens when a particular primary document analysis method, which has proven effective in mainstream public schools, is applied in the unique teaching context of a troubled youth residential treatment center?

#### Thinking Like a Historian

I applied a method of primary document analysis advocated by Stanford History Group called 'Thinking Like a Historian' (TLH). This curriculum was recently used in a six-month multi-school study involving hundreds of students and showed greater outcomes compared to a control group for historical thinking, factual knowledge, literacy, and transfer of current issues (Reisman, 2012). I followed Reisman's Activity Structure for the first four steps and then added a fifth step:

### **1. Background knowledge**

The TLH method provides a minimal amount of background information. I supplemented their background information with direct instruction, images, short video excerpts, textbook readings, and role-plays, but still kept background information limited to maintain a central focus on analyzing primary documents.

### **2. Central Historical Questions**

Lessons are based on central investigative questions. Examples include: Did Pocahontas save John Smith's life? What caused King Philip's War? Was Lincoln a racist? These questions are intended to incite curiosity, debate, and discussion.

### **3. Analyzing Historical Documents**

Investigation of historical documents is based on four steps from the TLH curriculum. These four steps are:

1. Sourcing: Students consider who made the document, for what purpose, what type of document it is, and when it was made.
2. Contextualization: Students place the information into a chronology and understand how the documents reflect the society and culture of the time.
3. Close Reading: Students investigate matters of claims, evidence, and rhetorical strategies.
4. Corroboration: Students compare and contrast documents to uncover the unique information included, the unique information left out, and what information is confirmed by multiple documents.

### **4. Discussion**

Students participated in class discussions related to the investigative questions and the documents.

## **5. Persuasive Paper**

Students concluded the study by answering the central investigative question from one of the document analyses in a persuasive paper.

### **Context**

I teach at a lockdown residential treatment center in the suburbs of a moderately sized metropolitan area of Utah. We have about 120 residents from many different parts of the United States. Most of them are from Alaska, California, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada, and Arizona. Our resident population is very diverse. About half are White. The rest of the residents are Hispanic, Black, Native American, or of mixed ethnic background.

There are three units for male sexual misconduct residents, three units for troubled youth male residents, three units for troubled female residents, and two units for students who struggle primarily with Aspergers, social disabilities, and mental disabilities. Each unit has ten to fifteen residents. All of our students are ages twelve through seventeen. My US History classes included a class of male sexual offenders, a class of troubled males, and a class of troubled females.

My students have multiple criteria that distinguish them from most students at mainstream public schools. Residents often have traumatic, violent, and sexual backgrounds. Many of our students have attempted suicide, abused drugs, participated in gangs, committed arson, and refused to attend school. They have higher rates of learning,

behavioral and emotional disabilities, lower rates of literacy, and they often lack basic social, cultural, and historical background information.

My students usually come from diverse forms of family arrangements. Apart from our Asperger clients, to my knowledge, I have not had a resident raised by their married, biological parents. Many students have told me that they have never met their father or that their mother did not know who their father was. Many are being raised by a grandmother, a distant relative, adoptive parents, or foster parents. For some, a caseworker is the only consistent adult presence in their life. Certainly, in a treatment center, I see firsthand, the consequences of the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family.

This study examined the challenges and rewards of applying Stanford History Group's 'Thinking Like a Historian' (TLH) program in the context of a treatment center to better understand the necessary modifications and adjustments that would be needed to successfully apply this program. I applied action research for my methodology, and an analytic autoethnographic journal, student persuasive essays, and student reflections for my data. I analyzed my data using the constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). When I applied the TLH program to my classes, the findings demonstrated that my students did not successfully apply historical thinking even after explicit instruction, extensive modeling, and guided practice. Challenges such as limited classroom time, intense behavioral issues, low rates of literacy, learning, emotional, and behavioral disabilities, low self-efficacy, and the lack of background knowledge all converged to undermine the success of this program.

After applying this program for one month and trying multiple modifications with

mediocre success, I realized that perhaps a primary document-centered curriculum is not the most appropriate means of teaching and learning content in this context. My students needed a curriculum that provides more scaffolding, and builds on itself in a slower, more gradual manner. Primary documents, in contrast, are inherently difficult and confusing. Primary document analyses may be better used by teachers to *demonstrate* history content they have already taught, and for students to *demonstrate* and *apply* the understanding that they have already acquired.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Potential Benefits and Challenges of Applying Primary Documents

Primary documents are the closest written sources we have to the past. They include the written words from the past in any form: including a memorial on a stele carved in stone, ancient scrolls, letters, journals, newspapers, literature, and official government records. They can also include the photographs and paintings of an era.

Teaching with primary documents has become a popular form of teaching history (Cleary & Nuemann, 2009; Barton, 2005). It has often been marketed as a way to keep history competitive and relevant by teaching critical thinking skills to a generation bombarded with advertising and contradictory messages in the media (Wineburg et al., 2011; Nokes, Dole & Hacker, 2007). Advocates argue that the analysis of primary documents can improve literacy (Barton and Levstik, 2004). Literacy experts suggest that students need multiple exposures to various forms of texts (Reisman, 2012). Advocates also argue that the use of primary documents lends itself to cooperative learning techniques as well as demonstrates various views in contrast to the monolithic view of the teacher or textbook (Gradwell, 2010; Doppen, 2000).

Analyzing primary documents can be empowering. Rather than memorizing information that will soon be forgotten, students employ historical understanding in debates, discussions, presentations, or essays. This mirrors a more correct epistemology of history. Allowing students to create historical understanding through primary

documents shows that history is socially constructed and debatable. This practice empowers students by providing them with the opportunity to directly participate in the social construction of history (Brooks, 2009; Gradwell, 2010). Analyzing primary documents in the classroom can also be empowering to minorities by employing the voices of the marginalized, such as women, Native-Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, or Asian-Americans (Gradwell, 2010; Meo, 2000).

Some argue that primary documents can better help students develop historical empathy (Doppen, 2000). Gaining an emotional empathetic attachment is difficult if the subject is broad, political, economic, or military history. Reading an individual's journal, seeing photographs, or reading their letters, however, are activities that humanize history. They allow us to capture a glimpse of individual perspectives and experiences.

The use of primary documents also illustrates that history did not *have* to happen in the manner it did. Ordinary people influenced history through their agency. Fuhrer (2009) shared primary documents that revealed how an average Lexington family “made history” by having their own Lexington Tea Party days before the more famous Boston Tea party. Fuhrer noted, “Had John Parker and his neighbors not acted, or had they acted differently, history would have been different” (Fuhrer, 2009, p. 502). Fuhrer points out how this demonstrated historical agency as well as historical contingency, meaning things did not have to transpire the way they did (Fuhrer, 2009; Levy, 2006).

Not only do students witness agency in action, the analysis of primary documents requires *students* to exercise a greater amount of agency. Instead of passively memorizing a textbook or a lecture, students have to ask questions, investigate, make conclusions, and defend their conclusions. The analysis of primary documents requires

higher levels of thinking such as critical thinking skills and synthesis level thinking skills. This can help undermine the agenda of a textbook or teacher. It places students in a position of more power and control over their learning (Grant & Gradwell, 2005).

Advocates of historical thinking assert that it is more than an esoteric historical practice. Rather, it is a life skill that can be applied anytime students read a newspaper, listen to the news, or watch a movie. Nokes et al. (2007) argued that historical thinking can empower students with the critical thinking skills essential for citizens of a democracy:

Living in a democratic society during the information age demands that citizens be critical readers of the barrage of information that inundates them on a daily basis. Rarely, if ever, is there a single source—such as the traditional history textbook—that concisely encapsulates the complex issues facing our society. Rather, there are a variety of sources to be read, evaluated, synthesized, and interpreted. (p. 503)

Teachers may help establish a more effectual democratic system when they have students analyze information from various sources, form their conclusions using evidence, respectfully discuss various conclusions, and then articulate their conclusion to their peers.

Although there are many *potential* benefits found in the literature, there are only three studies that attempt to *prove* the effectiveness of applying historical thinking in the classroom: Nokes et al. (2007), De La Paz (2005), and Reisman (2012). Students that applied heuristics with various sources in a fifteen-day study performed by Nokes et al. scored better on history content and used sourcing and corroboration more than their peers who learned from a textbook. In a study by De La Paz, eighth grade students that received explicit instruction in sourcing, corroboration, and writing of persuasive essays had higher quality essays in length, persuasion, and accuracy. In another study by

Resiamn (2012) with 236 eleventh graders over six months, students completed a TLH analysis activity at least once a week. Reisman found significant gains in regard to historical thinking, factual knowledge, and reading comprehension, in comparison to their peers who were taught in mainstream classrooms.

These are each valuable and significant studies, but I have concerns with the use of these studies as absolute proof of the effectiveness of primary documents. The Nokes et al. (2007) study only lasted for fifteen days. This may be an insufficient time period to discern long-term gains in historical thinking and content. In the De La Paz study (2005) it is easy to see that direct instruction of persuasive writing will produce better writing. Reisman (2012) is the first primary document analysis study that has been applied over an extended period (six months). One concern I have with the Reisman (2012) study, is that the researcher may have self-selected teachers that would participate by those that showed up to a special training. Those that did not show up were the control group. This way of selecting the participants and control group weakens the validity of the study. The best teachers are usually most interested in improvement, and therefore are more likely to show up at an optional training.

In all the studies, primary documents were not the only sources being used. In the Reisman study, participating classes only needed to do one primary document analysis a week. The Nokes et al. and De La Paz studies appeared to have used a combination of primary and secondary sources. In contrast, I decided that I was going to make primary document analysis activities the *center* of my curriculum. Other activities would be for the purpose of providing conceptual or background knowledge to enable students to successfully read and interpret the documents.

A few studies recognized the enormous challenges involved in applying primary documents in the classroom (Cleary & Neumann, 2009; Barton, 2005). Wineburg (1991a) warned that documents are “slippery, cagey, and protean” (p. 500). Just like a textbook, primary documents can be ethnocentric, irrelevant, boring, politically charged, and passively swallowed by students as absolute truth. Attention also needs to be focused on the *methodology*. Just as important as *what* students are reading is *how* they are reading. Cleary & Neumann (2009) argue that they need to be provided with the “tools and context” in order for them to succeed (p. 69).

Many teachers believe that applying primary documents in the classroom requires too much time (Yeager & Wilson, 1997). Another concern that teachers have expressed is that students may not be developmentally mature enough to comprehend the complexity of primary document analysis (Fehn & Koeppen, 1998). Nokes et al. (2007) concluded that their students did not successfully apply the historical tool of contextualization. They speculated that the skill may not have been taught well, that students lacked background understanding, or that students lacked the developmental maturity to apply this skill. Nokes et al. (2007) wrote “It may be that the heuristic is too inherently difficult to teach to high school students or to younger students” (p. 502). My experiences in applying this project validated concerns about students requiring too much class time, student developmental immaturity, and students struggling with insufficient background understanding.

## The Method of Analyzing

### Primary Documents

After comparing and contrasting multiple methods I settled on the method advocated by Stanford History Group called Thinking Like a Historian. This curriculum was recently used in a six-month multi-school study involving hundreds of students and showed greater outcomes in a control group for historical thinking, factual knowledge, literacy, and transfer to current issues (Reisman, 2012). This method employs sourcing, contextualization, close reading, and corroboration. A detailed explanation of each of these concepts follows.

#### **Sourcing**

According to Britt and Aglinskas (2002), sourcing should include the author's position, his or her "educational training, affiliation with an organization or institution, and status as an authority" (p. 487). Participation is another part of sourcing. The participation aspect of sourcing requires the student to ask if the author was involved in the act, was an observer, or learned about it years after. Other important sourcing characteristics are the date of the document and the document type (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002). Wineburg (1991a) explained that, "there are no free-floating details – only details tied to witnesses" (p. 511). Students need to not just remember information, but from where the information originated.

One of the most critical aspects in regard to using sourcing is that it includes looking at the citation *before* engaging in an analysis. In one study, Wineburg (1991b) witnessed that historians "look first to the source or attribution of the document . . . 98%

of the time” (p. 79). In emphasizing sourcing, Neumann (2010) argued that a primary document methodology should begin with the teacher focusing on “Pre-reading,” arguably the most important step, where the person considers the audience, purpose, and agenda (Neumann, 2010, p. 507). This allows students to acquire a sense of the purpose for the text. This step is so critical that “At the beginning of the year, pre-reading the text and predicting what the author may say could well take more class time than actually reading the document itself” (Neumann, 2010, p. 507). Pre-reading is appropriately emphasized by Neumann (2010). It is a step that is very unnatural for students because they have been taught their whole lives to read solely for content. Even though sourcing should be a major focus in pre-reading, the practice of sourcing should continue through the entire reading of the document. Students should continue to ask questions about the author’s agenda, perspective, and audience. Sourcing should also include the motivation or the purpose of the document. This makes it closely related to the subtext, which will be discussed later.

### **Contextualization**

Contextualization requires historians to place an event in its appropriate historical context. Historians have to piece documents together to assemble “a detailed sequence of events in time and space” (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002, p. 489). In one study, Wineburg (1998) organized contextualization into six categories. The “spatiotemporal” includes the time and place. The social-rhetorical is “the social demands of situations in which actors sought to persuade others” (Wineburg, 1998, p. 325). The biographic includes personal life events. The historiographical places the document within the secondary literature. The linguistic takes account of what words meant during that time and age. Finally, the

analogical is how this event compares with other historical events (Wineburg, 2008, p. 325; Britt & Aglinskas, 2002).

Wineburg (1998) has shown that historians can successfully analyze primary documents and contextualize them, even when the documents are out of their expertise, where they lack detailed background knowledge. This implies that contextualization is not something that we do only before we read a document based on our background knowledge, but it is something that we do *with* the document. The document itself helps us create the context.

Although contextualization is an essential critical thinking tool, it is also an important content building tool. It allows students to connect with the information that they already know, make analogies with historical or present events, create a chronological and spatial view, and imagine how the primary document may represent social or cultural values. It requires students to use their imagination to try to grasp the clothing, the social cultural values, the language, etc., of the time. Where the other tools are concerned with establishing truth claims, this historical tool is the essential means for placing those truth claims into our schema of historical understanding.

### **Corroboration**

Historians use corroboration to compare the information contained in one document with the information contained in other documents. Historians “identify which important statements are agreed on, which are uniquely mentioned, and which are discrepant” (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002, p. 490). Wineburg (1991b) witnessed historians frequently “looking back” to other documents while analyzing a document (p. 83). He observed students looking back through the documents to a much lesser degree.



Corroboration is most effectively applied when students have multiple documents to choose from, a question to investigate, and discrepancies within the evidence. A document analysis with discrepant documents forces students to compare and contrast documents and decide why certain claims from certain documents may be more believable than others.

### **Close Reading: Perspective Recognition and Subtext**

Wineburg did not include close reading as a tool when he originally wrote his landmark papers in 1991. In a conversation, he admitted that all of the essential steps are contained with sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. But after years of applying this program in middle school classrooms he realized that many students simply did not read with enough attention to each particular word. He shared an example of how students read Lincoln's words, "the Negro is not my equal in many respects--certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment" (Lincoln, 1858, p.4). They glossed over the word "perhaps" without recognizing the courage required to say this word in front of a racist and hostile crowd. "Perhaps" can mean that the Negro *is* his equal in moral or intellectual endowment. Stanford History Group chose to add close reading to encourage this type of scrutiny of each word (S. Wineburg, personal communication, April 8, 2013).

Close reading includes the concept of perspective recognition. Perspective recognition is a term that means one tries to acquire a sense of another person's perspective. Barton and Levstik (2004) explain that perspective recognition requires us to attempt to understand people on their own terms. We must consider the beliefs, culture, and understanding of a time (Bartin & Levstik, 2004).

Students often naively assume that it is easy to “put yourself in another’s shoes.” They assume that the way they see the world is exactly the way that it is, and it is exactly the way that other people see and experience the world as well. Failing to realize the cultural distance is a type of ethnocentrism. Wineburg (2001) warned how foreign, strange, and shocking the past can be, which is why history may be one of the most human of all studies. It challenges and stretches us by forcing us to explore the meaning of humanity (Wineburg, 2001).

Subtext is an important aspect of many of these methods. Wineburg (2001) defines the subtext as “a text of hidden and latent meanings” (p. 65). I view the subtext as an agenda buried between the lines. This is also related to the question that Neumann (2010) and Wineburg (2001) have both employed “What does the text do?” (Wineburg, 2001, p. 65). It is important to see these documents as acts. They do not neutrally reflect the past; rather they helped change the past. They continue to influence the way we interpret history, as well as continue to change the present.

Since the subtext is ambiguous and vague, it helps to make it an explicit part of the methodology so that students deliberately identify it. This strikes me as a direct form of speaking truth to power. It is taking the hidden agenda and exposing it. This may be an important step in helping students exercise their agency for positive social change. Once they define the subtext then they can challenge it. This is a particularly hard thing to do with textbooks because they seem to be written by an anonymous “omniscient third person . . . from a position of transcendence, a position of knowing from on high” (Wineburg, 2001, p. 13). Primary documents, on the other hand, are written by ordinary people, that one can question and argue against.

## Incarcerated Youth Education

There are more than 134,000 youth incarcerated in America (Leone, Krezmien, Mason, & Meisel, 2005). According to Tavis Smiley's recent PBS episode (2012, March 26) the US spends five billion dollars a year on incarcerated youth. Despite such an investment, there is a paucity of research in regard to their education (Leone et al., 2005). There were not any rigorous literacy studies of incarcerated youth until Malmgren and Leone did their study in 2000. There are few studies that provide effective instructional interventions for incarcerated youth. I have not found a single study about teaching history to incarcerated youth, or any qualitative study that describes educating incarcerated youth. One purpose of this study is to increase the conversation and understanding about teaching in this unique context.

Incarcerated youth experience many disproportions. At a much higher rate than mainstream students, incarcerated youth tend to be poor minorities (Poe-Yamagata & Jones, 2000), with higher rates of learning, behavioral and emotional disabilities, and overall academic failure (Leone et al., 2005). America's incarcerated youth are about 40% African American (Sickmund, 2004).

Depending on the study, the total percent of incarcerated youth that require special education ranges from 33.4% (Quinn et al., 2005) to 38.15% (Nelson, Jolivet, Leone, & Mathur, 2010). In either case, this is much higher than the 12% rate found in mainstream education (Gagnon, Barber, Van Loan, & Leone, 2009). Despite such a high rate in special education students, many facilities lack the resources to provide adequate services to this population (Leone et al., 2005). About 50% of incarcerated youth with

special needs have emotional and behavioral disabilities (Gagnon & Richards, 2008). Scholars argue that these facilities have become the nation's "de facto psychiatric hospitals" (Nelson et al., 2010, p. 71).

Another major disproportion of this population is their high illiteracy rate. One study found that one in three incarcerated youth were illiterate, and the average reading level for all incarcerated youth was the fourth grade (Quinn et al., 2005). Incarcerated youth show significant deficits in all areas of reading (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003). Our global, twenty-first century culture is saturated by texts. Civic participation and career success is often conditional upon literacy. As a result, students with low literacy rates face intense marginalization. Despite this major problem, there is limited research on effective literacy instruction for this population. Some studies emphasize the need for explicit instruction on vocabulary and comprehension strategies (Leone et al., 2005).

A quality education could be a key factor in reducing recidivism and providing literacy, social skills, and vocational skills. However, schools for incarcerated youth have "one of the worst records of adhering to federal special education requirements" (Gagnon et al., 2009, p. 674). There have been forty-four class action lawsuits connected to the poor special education services provided in juvenile and adult correction schools (Quinn et al., 2005). In a recent survey, only about 80% of correctional schools were accredited by their State Department of Education, and about 50% of incarcerated youth education administrators believed that incarcerated students should not be expected to perform on grade level (Gagnon et al., 2009).

### Application of the Literature

The potential benefits of analyzing primary documents seem to perfectly align with the needs of the incarcerated youth population. This group is entitled to be immersed in a text-rich environment and to be exposed to a wide variety of texts. They need to not just read them, but to analyze, discuss, defend, and write about them. This population requires the critical thinking skills to question a popular culture that glorifies casual sex, drugs, and violence. They need to learn to work in teams, compromise, communicate, see others' viewpoints and gain a stronger sense of empathy as care (Barton and Levstik, 2004).

Incarcerated youth have experienced pervasive hopelessness, powerlessness, and silence throughout their lives. They deserve teachers with high expectations, who provide appropriate challenges to build self-confidence, so that they can overcome their personal trials. I began this study with the hope to provide an opportunity for my students to evaluate data, synthesize evidence, form conclusions, and defend those conclusions with logic and evidence. My expectation is that by providing a high quality education to my students I will empower them to succeed in the future.

Would applying primary document analysis activities in a treatment center for incarcerated youth be successful? The academic literature seems to indicate that it would. One study even went so far as to argue that the use of multiple historical texts provided a greater correlation than socio-economic status in student achievement (Smith & Niemi, 2001). Some scholars claimed that primary document analysis activities are most appropriate for advanced readers. In contrast, advocates of TLH argue that this program is *especially for* struggling readers. Wineburg, Martin, and Monte-Sano (2011)

stated that, “We believe that it is our struggling readers who *most* need instruction in learning how to read like a historian” (p. vi). They point to research that has repeatedly demonstrated that adolescents need ample exposure to multiple texts of various types, degrees of difficulty, and topics. I performed this thesis to ascertain if the potential benefits of primary documents discussed in this chapter are legitimate and to unveil more of the modifications that would be required to make this program successful in the unique context of a lockdown treatment center. I believe that a qualitative study would be helpful to shed greater light on the challenges involved in applying primary document analyses in a treatment center classroom of incarcerated youth, far removed from the ideals of the university.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

My study applied an action research methodology, an analytic autoethnographic journal, student persuasive essays, student reflections as data, and the constant comparison method for data analysis. This project was implemented during the months of February and March of 2013 and included seventeen consecutive days of class.

#### Method: Action Research

For my study I followed the action research model, which is ideal for me as a teacher-researcher in pursuit of my masters degree. action research is a method to generate knowledge (Koshy, 2009, p. 1). In the context of education, teacher-researchers seek to apply current research methods or ideas into their specific context. They use an iterative process of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and then revising. Planning is essential, but action research provides enough flexibility to adapt to the unexpected occurrences of real life.

While the scientific method often seeks to universalize abstract truth claims, Action research on the other hand, seeks to localize research and make it “living” and practical (Koshy, 2009, p. 1). Instead of being a neutral disinterested third party, an action researcher has a vested interest in the work in which she or he is engaged. As a consequence, the action researcher is heavily influenced by “epistemological and ontological views” (Koshy, 2009, p. 1). Their own perspectives will greatly influence their work.

The context is a primary focus for the action researcher. In a real context, there are many variables. Due to the variables, it is difficult to unveil specific causes of a phenomenon. The action research methodology allows me to apply the latest academic research to my unique context. It provides the structure of planning and the adjustability of changing those plans.

### Data Collection

For my project I used three forms of data collection. These included:

- An analytic autoethnographic journal in which I include descriptions of the daily implementation of my project, excerpts of student work, student comments, personal reflections about the success and failure of the project, and ways to improve and revise.
- Student essays, which I analyzed to determine student success or failure in applying historical thinking.
- Student reflections, which I include to grant students a direct voice in sharing their thoughts and opinions about learning through primary documents.

### **Analytic Autoethnographic Journal**

For my primary source of data I kept an analytic autoethnographic journal. This is a type of ethnographic journal that includes the author yet seeks to maintain a degree of objectivity and theoretical soundness. Autoethnography is becoming a much more widespread practice because it is ideally suitable for qualitative research (Anderson, 2006). This method is a result of many recent developments in the social sciences, especially the amalgamation of separate genres and the postmodern cynicism of the



universal application of knowledge.

Early American ethnographic endeavors of the forties and fifties completely left out all references to the researcher. The intention was to be neutral scientific observers. This method created a lack of self-disclosure. It made the self into “a hidden and yet seemingly omniscient presence in ethnographic texts” (Anderson, 2006, p. 383). Early ethnographers naively believed that the way they observed something was the same way that others observed it. In the seventies this began to change. Ethnographic researchers began to explicitly include themselves as a part of their research.

Since then autoethnography has continued to move in the direction away from neutral scientific observation and more towards emotionally evocative literature. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner argue, “the mode of storytelling is akin to the novel or biography and thus fractures the boundaries that normally separate social science from literature” (In Anderson, 2006, p. 377). In evocative autoethnography, the researcher must remain true only to their subjective experience. That seems to justify any sort of outrageous claim. I question the potential scientific benefit in producing evocative autoethnography. Rather, I seek to produce analytic autoethnography, which recognizes the challenges in engaging in research that involves interpretation and judgment based on values and limited experience, yet still seeks to improve scientific understanding. Analytic autoethnography walks the fine line between absolute faith in scientific positivism and complete post-modern skepticism.

Anderson (2006) provided five factors in defining analytic autoethnography. First, Anderson argued we need to be a Complete Member Researcher (CMR). Rather than being a neutral outsider, a CMR has a vested interest and is directly engaged in the

work. This requires the dual role of being a participant and an observer. There are challenges in this role. The duality of the role separates us from the group. Also, not all thoughts, feelings, and opinions in the group are homogenous.

Second, Anderson (2006) argued for analytic reflexivity. This means that we should understand how, as a researcher and a participant, we influence the environment and how the environment influences us. Third, as a CMR, he argued that we need to be present, visible, and active in the text. In other words, “The researcher’s own feelings and experiences are incorporated into the story and considered as vital data for understanding the social world being observed” (Anderson, 2006, p. 384). He cautioned that even though we include ourselves in the text, we are only part of the research. We are not the entire research.

Fourth, he argued that we need to have “engaged dialogue” with those that we are studying (Anderson, 2006, p. 382). We need to include the words of others. The CMR cannot completely “saturate” him or herself in the research (p. 386). Finally, the fifth requirement was a commitment to an analytic agenda. The self, the data and other people need to be included in the research, but the end purpose is to eventually “transcend” the data by using theoretical insight (p. 387). Anderson quoted Karp saying, “the value and vitality of a piece of research depend on its providing theoretical illumination of the topic under investigation” (In Anderson, 2006, p. 388).

In my analytic autoethnographic journal, I sought to follow the guidelines outlined by Anderson. I am a Complete Member Researcher. Although I am part of the classroom learning community, my secondary role as a researcher sets me apart, as well as my role as the teacher. In this thesis I provide self-disclosure, references to my

thought processes, and my emotional reactions to the successes and failures of the project. My decisions, challenges, and feelings are included in the research. Ultimately, however, my students are the primary focus. I engage with them directly and include data from their papers and their comments. I understand my limitations. I recognize that my students have different roles, and consequently different thoughts and feelings. I cannot say for sure what they are thinking or feeling or what their experiences are like. However, I use evidence to reach educated guesses. I then seek to incorporate the data about my students into theory that can be beneficial to other teachers and researchers.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data I used what is arguably the most common qualitative method available, Glaser and Strauss's Grounded Theory (GT) (1967; Denzin, 2010). The purpose of GT is not to describe what is going on but to build concepts that explain the data. It provides the opportunity for researchers to collect data and then, afterwards, form hypotheses and conclusions that are grounded in the data.

This method of data analysis was ideal for my circumstances. GT has been praised for allowing indigenous colonized peoples construct knowledge for themselves (Denzin, 2010). This may be a type of data analysis that is ideal to provide greater visibility to the invisible incarcerated youth. GT allowed me to form my conclusions after I performed the study. Working in a treatment center I needed the flexibility provided by GT to collect and analyze data.

This study did not produce an enormous amount of data. I ended up having to rely almost entirely on my analytic autoethnographic journal and thirteen student

persuasive essays. This simplified the coding process. The smaller amount of data resulted in a data analysis that was potentially more subjective. Yet I sought to maintain an integral relationship to the data and to base all claims in evidence.

## Context

### **The Facility**

The use of alternative education programs has skyrocketed in the United States in the last decade. As of 2008 there was an estimate of 25,000 alternative education programs (Leiding, 2008). This brings up concerns related to regulation, standards, and accountability.

According to Leiding (2008), there are three different types of alternative schools. Type I schools are schools that a student freely chooses as an alternative to a mainstream public school classroom. Most alternative schools are type I alternative schools. These are schools of choice and include magnet schools, charter schools, schools without walls, and career-oriented schools (Leiding, 2008). Type II alternative programs are not schools of choice. A student is usually sentenced to these schools as a last resort before expulsion, and their focus is often on behavior modification. Type III programs are also not schools of choice and often have more intensive social/emotional remediation, rehabilitation, counseling, and support. I teach at a type III alternative school.

Type III programs often pose special challenges with accountability. Parents and students often have no or little say in regard to which school or program they must attend. Students are often placed at a great distance from their homes. Parents often have very little direct communication with the teachers in these schools. This can create a situation

where teachers are providing a service without a strong incentive to make it high quality. As a consequence, type III alternative schools can mean a lower quality education. About 80% of these programs are publicly run, and 20% are privately run (Nelson et al., 2010). My program is a private institution.

On a recent web posting, a treatment center educational consultant called Utah “the silicon valley of parent choice treatment centers” (Stednitz, 8/3/2008). In 1971 Provo Canyon School began, which over the years spawned other programs. The culture of Utah lends well to a culture of providing treatment to struggling teens. Utah has laws that are well designed to benefit struggling teens. An executive director of a Utah treatment center on the same web posting as above claimed that Utah has “some of the most well-thought-out, collaboratively-written laws concerning teen treatment in the nation” (Tibbits, 8/25/2008).

Utah has what may be termed as the Missouri Model. This means keeping units small, with residents living and working together in groups of ten to twelve. Every student is required to have an individual treatment plan, and if they qualify for special education services they must have an individual education plan (IEP) as well. This program has shown remarkable success in Missouri over the last twenty-five years and is being emulated by many other states (Nelson et al., 2010).

To provide care, shelter, food and education to traumatized, troubled adolescents is enormously complicated. Our facility contains a cafeteria, a full-court basketball gymnasium, an open courtyard, a walled-in area of green grass, and a ropes course. Faculty and staff include nurses, cooks, teachers, direct-care staff, office staff, and management totaling about four hundred full-time employees. There are also contracted

part-time employees such as a psychologist, two psychiatrists, a speech therapist and an occupational therapist. Despite so many staff and resources, most students spend many hours every week, watching movies in a dayroom, often without any windows, with very little physical, visual, audio, or cognitive stimulation.

Resident stays range from a couple of weeks to three or four years. The vast majority stays between six months and year. This is comparable to the national average of eight to nine months found by Snyder and Sickmund (1999) and Nelson et al. (2010).

Our school has ten full-time teachers, a principal, a full-time educational assistant, and a part-time librarian. We only teach the core subjects: math, science, social studies, physical education and English. The most students I have had enrolled in a class is seventeen, and the least is five. Each resident is placed in classes according to their ability with residents that are in the same program. For example, all sexual misconduct residents are divided into three classes according to ability. During each class there are usually one or two full-time staff. Some staff members are helpful and actively involved in class, others are preoccupied with an overwhelming amount of paperwork, and others spend their time browsing Facebook on their smartphone.

Our program has many ways that it succeeds. We provide “(a) small class size, (b) one-on-one interaction, (c) a supportive environment, (d) success toward students’ futures, and (e) flexibility” (Tissington, 2006, p. 23). Classrooms appear “cheerful and welcoming” with padded chairs, large windows, mounted projectors, pseudo-wood Pergo floors, wooden tables, and inspirational posters and mottos on the walls (Mattoz, 2002, p. 30). “The message is clear [to the residents]. You are worth all of this. You belong here” (Mattoz, 2002, p. 30). Small classes enable me to get to know my students and to

connect with them. I have endless flexibility to adapt lesson plans to their needs.

Students often progress multiple grades in literacy in one year. Caring administrators, teachers, and staff support student learning.

When I was preparing to implement this primary document analysis program, I originally had three classes of high to moderate functioning students. Almost all of my students could read well above an eighth grade level. But then the number of residents enrolled in some programs grew while the number of residents in other programs shrank. Some classes were stretched to their limit with seventeen students while other classes had only five students. As a result, my classes were unexpectedly changed right before I was about to begin my project. I lost a class with students that worked at grade levels from ninth through eleventh, and I gained a US History class with students that worked at grade levels from third through sixth. I also kept two classes with students that worked at grade levels from about fifth through eighth. This is simply part of the nature of working at a treatment center. I decided that I would still go forward with my project.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study are the residents that are members of my three US History classes. My US History classes included a class of male sex offenders, the Trailblazers, a class of troubled adolescent males, the Ravens, and a class of troubled adolescent females, the Emeralds. This is a total of about thirty students, depending on the day. Almost all of the students chose to participate, but only thirteen of the guardian assent forms were mailed back and returned. Eight of these participants were male and five of them were female. About half of the participants were White non-Hispanic and the rest were Hispanic, Black, and of mixed ethnic background. Eleven of the thirteen

student participants have IEPs.

Almost all of our residents are court-ordered to attend our program because of their behavior. Many of our residents are referred and paid for by school districts that lack the facilities to provide therapeutic twenty-four-hour care. One of the major characteristics of the care that residents receive is the enormous amount of coercion that is exerted over them. Another factor is the tremendous amount of marginalization that they have received.

### Coercion

The residents in our program are under twenty-four-hour supervision. State law mandates a ratio of no more than five residents for every one staff within sight. Students who are not being watched for a few minutes often do something extreme like kick a hole in the wall, attack another resident, or attempt suicide. Although twenty-four-hour supervision is essential there are some significant drawbacks. Students have to ask permission to use the bathroom or enter their bedroom. After class they are required to stand in line, put their hands behind their back, and count off. While in line, they are supposed to face straight ahead and not talk. Every time they travel from one part of the facility to another they have to travel in line-behavior.

Federal law states that residents can only be placed in restraints when students are a danger to others, themselves, or to property. However, restraints are often used as a tool for coercion (Nelson et al., 2010). Residents are frequently threatened that if they do not get in line, they will be put in a restraint. Every hour of everyday they are being scored on their behavior and rewarded or punished accordingly. The lesson they are expected to learn is complacency (Eisner, 2002). These students are being acculturated



for prison, for a lifetime on welfare, or for very menial jobs (S. Camicia, class discussion, March 24, 2012; Willis, 1977).

Perhaps the greatest form of coercion and control over the residents is the psychotropic medication they are forced to take. I have had countless students pass out in a puddle of drool. During the last four years, two of my students went to the hospital because their kidneys were failing. One student was perfectly fine when he first arrived, but after two weeks he could no longer pronounce any words. The medication paralyzed his tongue. No one knows what the long-term affects will be of taking these intense psychotropic medications (Hakim, 2011). These medications make teaching difficult. Students are often drowsy, cloudy-headed, and confused. Often getting a resident stabilized on long-term medication is a greater priority for the treatment center than providing therapy or education.

When a person has to live in conditions such as these, their pro-activeness, innovation, and sense of self-control are undermined. Students are given very few choices. Every minute of every day is planned for them, except for thirty minutes, at the most. Many of these students just stop trying. They often sit for hours staring at the wall. Anytime they are being disrespectful or not following directions, even accidentally, a staff member, teacher, or therapist can give them a negative consequence, which can invalidate multiple days of previous positive behavior. This is an enormous amount of power exercised over them. In countless ways, they are drowning in powerlessness.

### Marginalization

Multiple forms of marginalization converge on my students. About half are of ethnic minority. Many are of gender and sexual orientation minorities. The vast majority

is from a lower socioeconomic status. Most carry the stigma of being abandoned by one or both of their parents. Most have learning, behavioral, and/or emotional disabilities. Many suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Perhaps the greatest marginalization is being labeled as criminals for their misbehavior (Nelson et al., 2010). A typical resident may be Native American, openly gay, learning disabled with PTSD, be removed from their home due to a parent who is heavily involved in drugs, and also be convicted of torturing animals or selling drugs.

I cannot fully comprehend the combined affect of this marginalization on my students. This compounded marginalization often creates students with very little self-efficacy. They think that they are destined to fail. My students often want to fail. They often assume they failed even when they succeeded.

I hope to help my students overcome this powerlessness and marginalization. I want to grant them greater control and authority over their learning. I seek to give them voice – the kind of voice as expressed by Loutzenheiser (2002):

Voices—literally the words—of children of all ages can never be heard enough in educational research, especially the stories and perspectives of marginalized, ‘dangerous,’ or ‘damaged’ youth. (p. 441)

I applied this curriculum with the intention of granting my students a greater voice in their education. Primary document analysis activities teach students to think critically, question the material they are being taught, and form conclusions for themselves. They provide opportunities for students to share their ideas in class discussions and defend their ideas in persuasive papers.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

My findings come from thirteen student persuasive essays, student reflections, and my analytic autoethnographic journal. All of the data consistently shows that my students did not successfully apply historical thinking, as demonstrated by the TLH program. I evaluated the data according to evidence of students practicing sourcing, close reading, corroboration, and contextualization; as well as their understanding of content. I found that contextualization was the most difficult skill to apply.

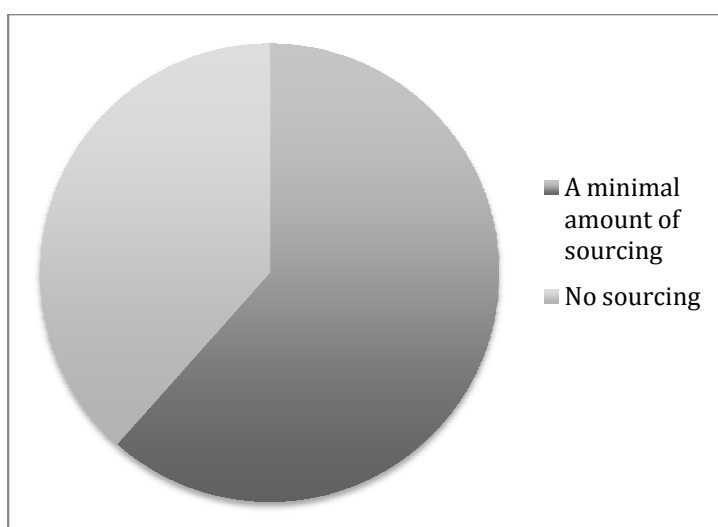
I developed graphs that represent student application of sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, close reading, and content learning in the students' persuasive essays. These essays are a good sample of all of my students. They include a variety of abilities, ages, and application of historical thinking skills. They include some of my best and worst students, as well as many in the middle.

#### Sourcing

Sourcing seems to be the easiest historical thinking tool to employ for my students. If they showed the source from which they drew evidence, I counted them as having applied sourcing. In their persuasive essays, students showed sourcing by stating who created the source. Examples of sourcing, taken from the essays, are as follows: "Jane Addams is talking about . . ." (Raven 6, 2/28/2013), "In this document Hilda Satt tells about . . ." (Raven 1, 2/28/2013), and "In one document from 1909 Jane Addams' attitude . . ." (Raven 14, 2/28/14). After explicit instruction and extensive modeling, many students still failed to apply this practice. Some students sourced the wrong thing.

For example, this student put the document letter, but did not include who wrote the document. He wrote “in document D which was positive . . .” (Raven 12, 2/28/2013). Other students included historical information or even quotations without any reference of where that information came from. Figure 1 portrays eight essays out of thirteen that applied sourcing.

Figure 1



### *Student Application of sourcing*

Even though a majority of my students applied sourcing, many still struggled to apply the skill appropriately. If the source was from a perspective that they agreed or identified with, then they usually interpreted the source as being completely true. If the source was from a perspective that they disagreed with, then they usually interpreted the document as completely false. For example, when we discussed the Homestead Strike, most of my students trusted Emma Goldman’s account and completely disregarded Henry Frisk’s account because she was on the side of the workers and he was on the side of the management. They did not consider the fact that she was not there during the

strike and that she wrote her account almost forty years later. One student wrote:

Goldman Thinks That The Work[er]s Were Strong and Good People. . . .  
 Goldman's [is more believable] Because She Has More Reasonable Answers And  
 Her's Is More Beleaveble.  
 And She Is Thinks More About Whats Inside A Person. (Raven 11, Journal,  
 2/4/2013, p. 3)

It was encouraging that they were considering the source, but the sole criteria for believing the source appears to be that she thought “the workers were strong and good people” and that she “thinks more about what’s in a person.” It appears that what was most important for my students, was not the evidence from the sourcing, but the issue of justice, fairness, and identity. Due to their marginalized positions, my students naturally identified with the powerless workers instead of owners, managers, and authority figures.

### Close Reading

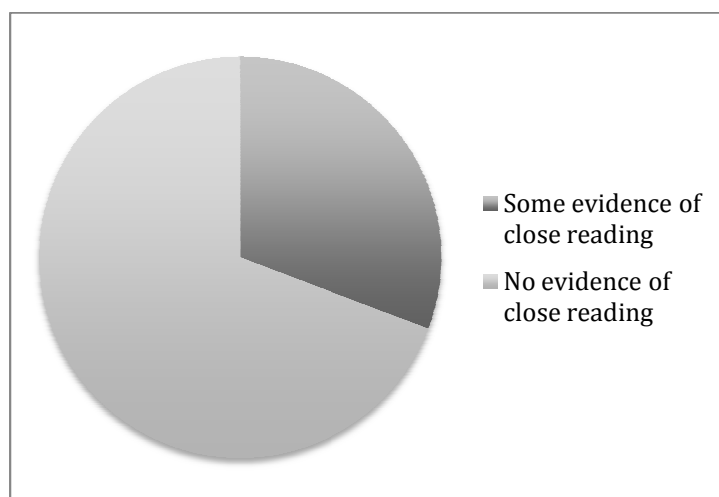
Close reading was a hard skill to identify. I included it as having been practiced when students included a discussion of the use of specific words or when they discussed a person’s agenda or motive for creating the source such as “Jane Addams thought that the immigrants were ‘frivolous and irresponsible’ because the girls and boys were dancing . . .” (Panthers, 2013). This student applied close reading by observing how Addams negatively labeled the immigrant youth. Figure 2 portrays four essays out of thirteen that applied close reading to a degree.

One of the best examples of close reading was during a class discussion. We were discussing the corruption of political bosses. One document, written by a political boss, defended the boss system. The other document, written by a muckraker, criticized the boss system. Most of my students took the side of the boss, instead of the muckraker,

in their worksheet assignments prior to the class discussion. Here is the account of the class discussion from my journal:

One student said that Steffens [the news reporter] was stealing more money than Plunkitt [the political boss]. I clarified that Steffens was just a newspaper reporter and not stealing any money. One student made the point that you cannot believe everything that reporters said. But he said that this one seemed like he was telling the truth. I asked why he believed Steffens. Another student made the point that Plunkitt was trying to defend himself and so he is more likely to paint a good picture. He may not have disclosed everything that he was doing. (Journal, 2013, p. 98-99)

Figure 2



### *Application of Close Reading*

My students realized that Steffens as a news reporter did not have a clear motive to lie. He did not have anything to gain by fighting against corruption. Therefore, it may be more likely that “he was telling the truth.” In contrast Plunkitt was defending a system in which he had a vested interest, and therefore would have a stronger incentive to paint a more positive picture.

My students’ past experiences make them inherently cynical towards authority. This cynicism inspires them to question the things that they read and learned, which I

praised them for. However, they struggled to use appropriate means for determining what *is* true. Instead of using historical thinking by closely examining the arguments, words, and evidence to establish truth claims, they picked sides based on the class, race, or political viewpoints. Some students applied close reading just to back their own opinions. Most students did not consider the merits of opposing viewpoints. As a result, their arguments were weaker. One of the best student essays included some close reading, but failed to fully apply this aspect of historical thinking:

Jane Addams was inconsiderate not giving people the credit they need and rude.

In one document from 1909 Jane Addams' attitude was negative and rude. She said the dance halls were filled with kids that acted "defiantly". She was rude by not considering how they feel.

In another document from 1910 Jane Addams' attitude was rude. She gave them life skills. She said "the public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing forces." That means they are taking all the credit for them being American.

In the last document from 1950 at the Christmas party Hilda thought that Jane Addams was respecting her and her culture. If she respected her culture she would have played Jewish music too. She basically said that they should be Christian.

In conclusion she was judgmental. She thought that the American way is better than their way. . . . (Raven 14, 2/28/2013)

This essay revealed an interpretation of knowledge and understanding that is black and white. He demonized Jane Addams without considering her as a complex, multifaceted human being. He calls her "inconsiderate," "rude," "negative," and "judgmental" (Raven 14, 2/28/2013). He used each document to portray her in the worst light possible. A more effectual application of close reading would reveal how subtle historical truth really is. This document also reveals how issues of discrimination were more important to many students than correct historical thinking.

Only one student portrayed a glimmer of the subtle complexities of close reading. Her thesis stated, “Jane Addams cared about the immigrants but she also judged them” (Panthers 8, 3/6/2013). Just like Raven 14, this student was also very aware of the issue of discrimination, but she saw that this attribute did not fully characterize Addams. Addams is a complex human who could be judgmental *and* caring.

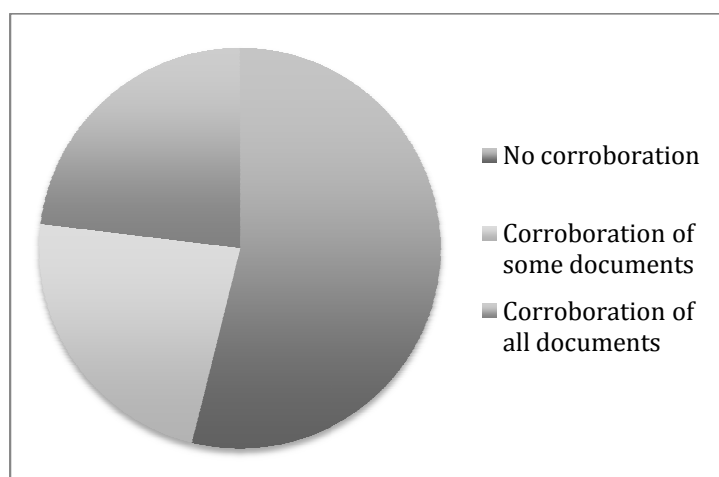
### Corroboration

Corroborating between all of the documents was a difficult task for my students. They could see the opinion of one document, but they struggled to synthesis all of the evidence into one theme. The students that were able to do so had a clear thesis as a result. I applied Venn Diagrams to help students corroborate the documents and reach conclusions. For a three-document analysis I used a triple Venn Diagram. Using Venn Diagrams was a simple way to help locate information that were validated in multiple documents and to locate information that was uniquely contained on only one or two documents.

Many students only included information from the documents that supported their opinion. If it did not support their opinion they left it out. Others discussed each of the documents separately, but failed to corroborate them. Figure 3 portrays seven essays with no corroboration, three with corroborations of some of the documents, and three out of thirteen with corroboration between all of the documents.



Figure 3



### *Student Application of Corroboration*

The following student discussed two of the three documents. He described each separately, but failed to explicitly establish a synthesized conclusion between them.

Jane Addams thinks that immigrants are ‘defiant’ and she thinks their dancing is ‘frivolous’ and irresponsible. She thinks the dance halls are bad because they just go there to meet and hang with girls and other stuff innappropriately. . . .

Jane Addams is talking about an Italian girl . . . [same excerpt from close reading section] (Raven 11, 2/28/2013)

In his first paragraph he discussed the first document, where Addams appears judgmental and self-righteous. In his second paragraph he discussed the second document, which also makes Addams appear judgmental and self-righteous. In the third document, a Polish Jewish girl praises Adams for being respectful and tolerant. This student leaves the third document completely out. He did not provide a statement that ties the two documents together.

Some students included only the documents that supported their opinions. In the following excerpt, a student discussed two documents separately and then included a unified conclusion. He included the two documents that portrayed Jane Addams as

judgmental and self-righteous and simply left out any discussion of the document that portrayed Jane Addams as generous and loving towards the immigrants.

Jane Addams thinks that these tens should not be dancing alone without adult supervision. In one excerpt Jane Addams' *The Spirit of youth and the city streets* from 1909 she talks about how . . .

Excerpt from Jane Addams book, *twenty year full house*, {1910} . . .

In conclusion Jane Addams doesn't seem like the person who cares for immigrants. . . . (Raven 13, 2/28/2013)

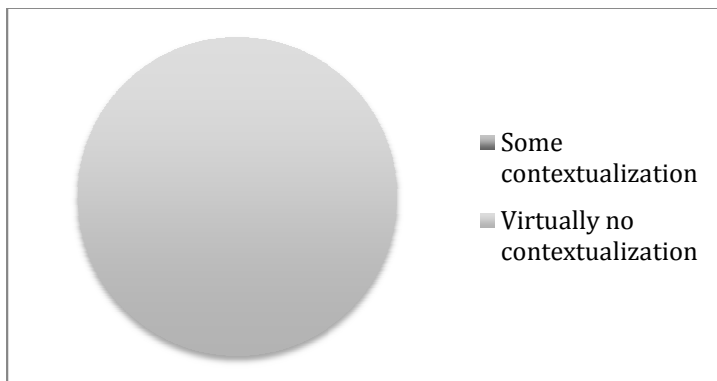
This student does not confront the contradictory document. Since he only includes some of the evidence he reaches a more narrow conclusion, that Jane Addams “doesn’t . . . care for immigrants” (Raven 13, 2/28/2013). If he had included and discussed the third document, perhaps he would have developed a more nuanced, accurate conclusion. Instead, he only included the documents that support his thesis. As a result, his understanding of a complicated issue was shallow.

There were three essays that corroborated all three documents. These students included evidence from each document in support of a unified theme and a clear thesis. Perhaps the best example of an essay that corroborated all three documents was the one from Raven 14 (2/28/2013) that I used above. Raven 14 shared a central thesis by stating that Addams was “inconsiderate . . . and rude” (2/28/2013). He shared evidence from the first two documents that portrayed Addams as “negative and rude” (2/28/2013). In his rough draft he failed to corroborate the third document. After I returned his rough draft, we discussed the third document. I asked him how it could be seen as disrespectful to invite a Jewish person to exclusively sing Christian hymns. After this, he formed a connection between all the documents to build a thesis supported by much more substantial evidence.

### Contextualization

Almost all of my students turned the debate about closing immigrant dance halls into a present day conflict about teenagers' right to party. There was little comprehension of the needs and perspectives of the era in which they lived. One student complained that Addams was "trying to find a way to cut off dance party's" (Raven 12, 2/28/2013). Students appeared to believe that these dance halls were little different than modern-day dance clubs. Figure 4 portrays that not one of the thirteen essays showed material evidence of contextualization.

Figure 4



### *Student Application of Contextualization*

Raven 14 almost applied contextualization in his conclusion. After calling Addams "judgmental" he stated:

She thought that the American way is better than their way. That is wrong because American means that you should be free to live out your religion and life the way you want. That was not the case a hundred years ago. (Raven 14, 2/28/2013)

It is unclear what exactly he was referring to when he said, "That was not the case a hundred years ago," but I wonder if he was gaining a small sense about the evolving

definition of the word ‘American’ (Raven 14, 2/28/2013). It appears that he may be recognizing that American has a much broader definition today than ever before in terms of race, religion, and the way you want to live your life. If he had explained this a little bit more I would have considered it contextualization.

I came across other challenges to contextualization during one of the primary document analyses about Chinese Immigrants. The first three documents portray Chinese workers as cheap slave labor. The final document written by a Chinese immigrant shares a completely different picture. He argues that Chinese workers received greater pay because they are more honest and faithful. Instead of realizing that the documents blatantly contradict each other, this student concluded that they must come from different time periods. In my journal I reflected on this student’s work:

This student failed to see how the Chinese Autobiography contradicted all of the other evidence. For this third document he wrote “The Chinese is better and Faithful and is Not a cheap *Now*.” With his emphasis in the *now* he interpreted this document as much later and he thinks that the Chinese behavior suddenly changed from being a cheap laborer to being expensive. He does not realize that the documents are talking about the same time period. (Journal, 2013, p. 77)

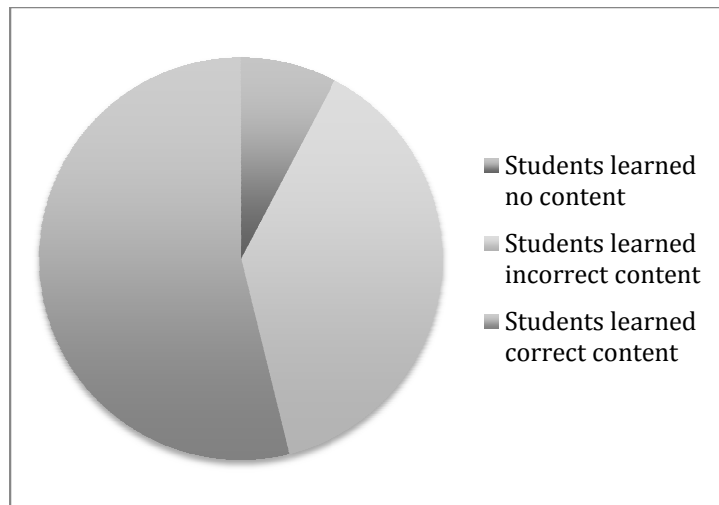
This student failed to apply contextualization to form a chronological understanding of the events. This is the “spatio-temporal” category of contextualization that Wineburg discussed (Wineburg, 1998, p. 325). The failure to fully apply contextualization may have been caused by little comprehension of the content.

### Content

There were many students that did not learn historical thinking, but they still learned content. Figure 5 portrays that there was only one essay that showed no understanding of content, five essays that revealed incorrect content, and seven essays

that portrayed correct content.

Figure 5



#### *Student Demonstration of Content*

I found that teaching historical content through primary document analyses is an ineffective way to teach history in this context. Some of my top students succeeded in developing an understanding of historical information, but many others developed blatant distortions. This is a natural consequence of students figuring things out for themselves.

Students struggled with decoding and comprehension. Therefore, they would guess about what the material meant. Students lacked background information. Consequently, they used their imagination to bridge the gaps of understanding. A common accusation that my students made against Lincoln Steffens, a muckraker fighting against corruption, was that he “steals and doesn’t give anything back” (Journal, 2013, p. 93). In analyzing primary documents about Chinese immigrants in the late nineteenth century, one student concluded, “there is an overPopulation of Chinese in California” (Journal, 2013, p. 77). Perhaps, this student from California is speaking from

his own perception instead of from the documents. As discussed above, another student concluded that Chinese salaries were suddenly raised after years of persecution. As also discussed above, many students erroneously concluded that Jane Addams was trying to take away teenagers' right to party. Students used their limited schema to make sense of each document. Unfortunately this often led them to make faulty conclusions.

Some students developed almost no historical understanding. A primary document analysis requires a greater student investment for students to learn. If students are not willing to make the investment, then they will learn *less* than they would through more traditional means. For his persuasive essay, in which he spent five days in the computer laboratory, one student wrote, "I think she is piling a herd game with the young immigrants are familiarity" (Raven 4, 2/28/2013). I do not know what this student intended to say. This student completed virtually no work during the duration of this project. He was not engaged. He could have succeeded but it would have required exclusive one-on-one attention and much more time. If I sat with him and ignored the entire class I probably could have gotten him to complete more of his work. But this student simply lacked the self-control to engage on his own.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

From my findings it is clear that this program was less effective for my school/teaching context. My students did not apply the cognitive tools of the historian to the level or degree that I had hoped. As a result I was discouraged. I was disappointed in my ability to successfully teach the TLH program. I was disappointed in my students who appeared to put forth a minimal amount of effort to acquire skills that I believe could be crucial in helping them break the cycle of incarceration. I was also disillusioned to a degree by the TLH program itself. I realized that the TLH program requires students with greater literacy ability, background understanding, and self-efficacy. Finally, I was frustrated by my treatment center that took away vital class time, and failed to provide adequate structure and support for a unit that was in crisis. I will expound on these issues in the following pages.

#### Student Reflections

After students finished their persuasive essays, I had them complete a reflection on their thoughts and feelings about the project. A few students shared positive responses about analyzing primary documents. One argued that primary documents “explain it better than someone telling it . . . It was [good] because I got to hear the people’s words that were there” (Ravens 14, Reflections, 3/8/2013). This student understood that in analyzing primary documents, he was learning history first-hand. Another student expressed the interest in “learning about new stories about people” (Panthers 8, Reflections, 3/8/2013). She observed how primary documents could provide

insightful personalizing information. Not one of my students participating in this study included a reference to evidence. During the reflection I realized that there was still confusion about what primary documents were, and how they were different from textbooks.

Most student reflections were negative. Students complained of the material not being engaging. Some called it “boring” or “stupid.” One explained that “its not very fun enough to stick in my mind” (Raven 11, Reflections, 3/8/2013). Another complained of “a Focusing problem” (Ravens 6, Reflections, 3/8/2013). Other students complained of the difficulty. “I get it but then again I dont get it” (Trailblazer 3, Reflections, 3/8/2013). Another explained it was “too hard for me” (Raven 12, Reflections, 3/8/2013). One student simply claimed it was “too much writing” (Panthers 3, Reflections, 3/8/2013). There were many things my students did not like about these primary document analyses including the required levels of literacy, engagement, and difficulty.

The reflections make it abundantly clear that this was an endeavor that failed to capture and engage my students. My students failed to see the process of analyzing primary documents as a critical part of their learning. Rather, it was a nuisance that inhibited them from learning the facts about history. These responses reveal a general sense of failure in the endeavor to teach historical thinking in this context.

### Journal

My own perceptions in my journal were very similar. From the first day, I felt like I was off to a “rough start” (Journal, 2013, p. 75). I wrote, “as I was circulating the



class it was obviously apparent that they did not get it” (Journal, 2013, p. 73). I made frequent references in my journal of my students ‘not getting it’ (Journal, 2013). I used a form of the word ‘frustrated’ fourteen times, and the word ‘discouraged’ four times (Journal, 2013). I knew I was not reaching many of my students but I did not know how I could make the curriculum more accessible.

In response to my students’ failure to apply historical thinking, I provided more explicit instruction of historical thinking and more modeling. These modeling sessions became much more tedious than a lecture. The result was poor engagement. Students still did not successfully apply historical thinking after these modeling sessions because they had lost engagement after fifteen minutes. These excerpts from my journal portray the challenges of engagement that I struggled with in my classes:

Many students are simply not paying attention and they are missing important material that I explained. There is still a problem of paying attention, having self-control, and staying engaged in school even when working with primary documents. After the discussion I showed them how to introduce a quote, use quotation marks, and explain where the quotation is from. By this time most of the students were not listening and this is a skill they continued to struggle with even until their essay. (Journal, 2013, p. 79)

This excerpt from my journal demonstrates the paradox that I was trapped in for the duration of my project. When I allowed students to work individually and in groups they became frustrated, created misinformation, and did not apply themselves. When we analyzed the documents as a class, the lesson became tediously slow paced and suffered extremely poor engagement. By the end of performing a class-wide document analysis, I would often have virtually zero participation. It was almost as if I was teaching an empty classroom. After four and a half years of teaching in this environment I had never experienced such painfully low engagement. After asking a question one day:

I waited for silence. Maybe I did not wait enough. But this slows my class down so much that my students lose focus. But they were already not focused. It is frustrating because most of them were staring off into space. I called on specific students by name and they did not have any idea what we were talking about. I kept calling on them but what can you do when all six of them are not listening. (Journal, 2013, p. 76)

I experienced the same thing with my two other classes as well. I tried talking with exaggerated hand movements and frequently altered the sound of my voice. I walked all over the room, further simplified the documents, gave each student a paper copy, had a copy displayed on the projector, and frequently called on individual students. Still I experienced little improvement. Again, I share an account of my frustration from my journal:

I think they are excellent documents. But I could not get my students engaged. I asked questions. I had them read the text. They did not learn much. There was very little engagement. I asked lots of questions. I continued to call on students individually. . . .

It was a frustrating class period. I don't feel like it was very productive for my students. Maybe I need to lecture more. My students *do* learn more when I lecture. They take notes and ask questions. There is a lot more engagement. This is significantly less effective for me lately. (Journal, 2013, p. 84)

Over multiple days of frustration I reflected on potential causes of why this program was less effective for my context. I argue that the TLH program requires a certain level of literacy, background understanding, self-efficacy, behavioral stability, and class time as a prerequisite to success.

### Literacy

The TLH program requires students to have a certain degree of literacy to be successful. I wanted them to acquire historical literacy, but they were struggling with *basic* literacy including spelling and grammar. They did not know how to use an

apostrophe, quotations, and capitalizations. They did not understand when to use there, their, and they're; were, we're, and where; and are and our. This literacy gap was a major barrier to analyzing these primary documents.

The ideal difficulty for a student is to be able to read a document with approximately 95% fluidity (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement [Ciera], 1998). My students can read the classroom sixth grade textbook with about 90% fluidity. The primary document analyses were much more difficult. Students stumbled on word after word. To alleviate the literacy gap I simplified documents almost to the point of being unrecognizable. My students still failed to comprehend the material.

Students often shared their best points in class discussions. Literacy appears to be a barrier that limited their ability to express their ideas. On one occasion, we were discussing a document where Jane Addams praised the public school system for being "Americanizing forces" (Addams, 1910, p. 4). In the document there is a strong sense of ethnic imperialism over Italian immigrants by teaching them how to cook, sew, and take care of children. One student shared an insight about how immigrants have to sacrifice some of their culture to become American. This student is proudly Mexican-American but does not speak Spanish. I have seen him bring a Spanish dictionary to class and heard him express the desire to learn Spanish. It was a really good insight. However, when he wrote his persuasive essay he summarized the document in his own words without any discussion about what it could actually mean for these immigrants:

Jane Addmas is talking about an Italian girl and her mother how they moved to america and how the douaghter is gonna help her mother out . . . [etc.] (Ravens 11, 2/28/2013).

Raven 11 failed to make the point in his paper that these immigrant families were

being forced to give up much of their culture to pay the price of becoming American. He failed to clearly point out the ethnic imperialistic subtext. It was an opportunity for close reading, that he had expressed verbally, but he missed during the writing assignment. I think it was partly because the literacy barrier impeded his ability to freely express his thoughts.

### Background Understanding

The TLH program required students to have a degree of background understanding to be successful. The concepts, the words, and the material were foreign and strange, and seemingly irrelevant. The cultural gap was much larger than anticipated. Students could not 'read between the lines' because they understood very few of the references.

One document by Lincoln Steffens (1904) from *Shame of Our Cities* included words such as patriotism, national prosperity, moral weakness, stock, divert, boss (in a political context), democracy, autocracy, and sovereignty. I defined the words. I simplified the document. The students still did not comprehend the material because they did not understand the concepts. One account from my journal shows the difficulty I encountered while I was helping two students analyze documents and complete a worksheet. My students were struggling with a question on the worksheet that asked, "Why does Steffens talk about Sunday and the Fourth of July?" The question is in reference to a statement on the document that says "Oh, we are good – on Sunday, and we are 'fearfully patriotic' on the Fourth of July" (Steffens, 1904, p. 4). In my journal I shared an account how students could not comprehend this statement because they lacked

background about Sunday worship and Independence Day:

The two students said they did not get it. I asked what do many people do on Sundays. One of them said he did not know. The other said they go to church. Then I asked what do many people do on the Fourth of July. They responded that they have a big party and look at fireworks. I asked why? What are they celebrating? I don't know. They are having a party. I asked what is important about the Fourth of July? One of them asked is it when the Statue of Liberty was built?

I waited for them to think and then asked other questions. But they lacked the background knowledge of church and Independence Day, so this statement had no meaning for them. They did not know what the word "hypocrite" means and they lacked the background knowledge to understand that this is what Steffens was calling the typical American businessman. (Journal, 2013, p. 89-90)

These students also missed the concept of "the bribe we pay to the janitor is *the little brother* of the bribe . . ." (Steffens, 1904, p. 4). They did not understand that it was saying that small bribes lead to bigger bribes, which lead to greater corruption. They missed the concepts in the statement "the president of the railroad, who agrees to use air-brakes only if he is given stock in the air-brake company" (Steffens, 1904, p. 4). They did not know what stock was, or what air brakes were. I explained the concepts. I did role-plays. I drew pictures on the board. I defined vocabulary words. This required an enormous amount of class time, and turned into long-winded tedious discussions that lacked student engagement. With such little background understanding, connecting prior knowledge to their schema was especially difficult. Having such little prior exposure provided little opportunity for students to comprehend and retain the content.

This experience helped reveal what I believe to be the biggest difficulty in applying primary document analysis activities in the classroom: The content of the curriculum does not build on itself in a logical progressive manner. This difficulty made the primary documents extremely difficult to scaffold. My students did not understand

the context, the vocabulary, the concepts, or the culture. I explained the concepts one-by-one, but they would have so many new concepts to apply at once that they became confused. There were too many variables and moving parts for them to consider.

In contrast, a textbook written at the appropriate level can construct history logically and progressively from the ground up. A PowerPoint presentation can use simple visual primary documents and explain the material step-by-step. Quality lectures, textbooks, and PowerPoint activities have been more successful in gradually and steadily building content understanding in this context. Previously, my students successfully and frequently shared comments, asked questions, and connected the knowledge to their prior understanding.

### Low Self-Efficacy

The TLH program requires students to have a degree of self-efficacy to be successful. In applying this program I came across extreme helplessness. One day students were supposed to write a persuasive paragraph using four documents about Chinese immigrants. I read through one of the documents with a student. As we were reading I underlined key phrases to help him write to a persuasive paragraph. Instead of writing a persuasive paragraph, he simply copied the underlined words straight from the document. In my journal, I wrote:

Johnny [name changed] did not do any work. He kept insisting that he did not understand. We read through parts of document D together. As we read through it I underlined a couple of phrases. I did not get a chance to see his paper until after he left. Apparently he thought he was just supposed to write the words that I underlined. "Cheap labor cry was always a falsehood. highest market price, excellent and Faithful workers."

It sounds like an encrypted riddle. Apparently he thought this was a persuasive

paragraph. Yesterday I wrote a persuasive paragraph as an example. I included my own opinion. I supported it with a quotation from the document. I introduced the quote. He put random words directly off the document and believed that he completed the assignment. (Journal, 2013, p. 85)

Although this student could read at a sixth grade level, he comprehended so little from the text that it was almost a foreign language to him. Instead of engaging the text, he blindly parroted the words back to me that I had underlined. This is the epitome of traditional historical learning. If it was a multiple-choice test, he may have done pretty well. This experience is a prime example of how hard it is to break the cognitive habits that have been deeply engrained in my students. Trying to get my students to break these rote memorization patterns was asking them to exert tremendous effort. The vast majority of my students were not ready for this task.

On another day, I also identified a lack of self-efficacy when I had to prompt and assist a student multiple times before he would complete an answer.

Out of a class of ten students, three students worked when I was helping them directly. They hardly read unless I was standing over them. I would often hold my finger on a paragraph and tell them to read it.

I can't find the answer said one student.

You need to read the paragraph.

I already read it.

Read it again.

Student reads it aloud and finds the answer. He explains it to me. I tell him to write it down. I come back ten minutes later after helping other peers. He still has not written it down. Says he does not know what to write. I have him read again, explain it to me again and then he finally writes it. (Journal, 2013, p. 78)

On this day almost the entire class refused to work, and the only three that did work, required constant help, prompts, and reminders.

The lack of self-efficacy was bewildering to me. There are many possible explanations. During the context section of my paper I discussed the powerlessness and marginalization of my students. Many of my students also believed in a myth of natural

born intelligence; that if one is smart then school is always easy. Therefore, when students struggled, they thought it meant they were ‘stupid.’ Such a myth of inborn intelligence coupled with a hostile environment, powerlessness, and low self-esteem is not conducive to a pedagogical program that requires students to struggle and grapple with contradictory information.

Analyzing primary documents is supposed to be difficult for *every* level, even professional historians. Not understanding is the nature of analyzing primary documents. One purpose of the project is for students to realize that historical information is not concrete and certain. It is not sanitized and simple as portrayed in textbooks, documentaries, and class lectures. This lack of clear delineated understanding was overwhelming for students. They were already inundated with psychological, emotional, and sexual issues.

In applying primary documents, students that previously had usually completed their work easily gave up. I realized that this was something completely new to them. My students were used to material in school being predictable, simply right and wrong, true and false. My best students want to memorize the correct answers. The TLH program required a student to make a greater investment. This investment can pay off in bigger ways. But if they do not make the investment then they will learn much less than if they were in a class, half engaged, watching a documentary, reading a textbook, or listening to the teacher lecture.

### Behavioral Instability

This program requires students to have a degree of behavioral stability to be



successful. Unfortunately, just as I began applying my project, my Trailblazers class went through one of the most intense negative cycles I have experienced in the four and a half years at this school. It was triggered by a couple of extremely agitated students who set off the rest of the members of my class. This unit also suffered from inconsistent core staff with no repose with the residents. As a consequence, residents had multiple fights a day; right before, during and after class. One fight would agitate all of the residents who would then start other fights in a domino affect.

Even on the rare occasions when I had the class under control, and it was stable enough to teach, they still struggled to listen. Their brains remained in fight or flight mode. Stress and trauma significantly decreased their ability to pay attention and retain material in their long-term memories. It seemed like they could grasp and comprehend so little. They were supposed to be about middle school level students, but they performed at a much lower level. As a consequence, many of my low functioning students significantly outperformed these higher functioning students in quality, comprehension, and retention. This is an account from my journal on the first day of attempting to implement the program in my Trailblazers class:

Class was a disaster. They arrived to class ten minutes late. It took a few minutes for ten students to sit down. Students started to yell at each other. One student accused another student of raping little boys. . . [Two students are kicked out]

After these episodes were finally over it was about 25 minutes into class and I had hardly been able to teach anything. . . . I went through the slides and did a role-play about standard oil creating a giant monopoly. They usually enjoy role-plays but half the students were not listening. (Journal, 2013, p. 74)

After a particularly disheartening day, I reflected on the abusive hierarchy that the students had established over each other. Instead of treating one another as human beings, they treated each other like they were a pack of dogs, each with his designated

place of dominance and resignation:

This unit is completely in crisis mode. Instead of receiving the treatment that they need, these poor kids are becoming much more traumatized each day. It is really sad.

There is a constant cycle of prejudice and abuse. Each student is in an intense pecking order. One student picks on another student because he is Black. He picks on another student because he is Gay and a Transvestite. He picks on another student who is smaller than he. He picks on another student. (Journal, 2013, p. 91)

This hierarchy created an atmosphere that was impossible for students to freely express themselves. They had to always appear strong. They could not appear weak. The easy way to avoid looking stupid or weak is simply to not try to complete the work. This significantly undermined the effectiveness of a program where everyone needs to struggle, collaborate, and share.

My students were preoccupied with attacking or getting attacked by a peer. For this reason, their cognitive resources were already fully taxed. They were unable to focus their energies and effort on something that did not seem critical for their immediate survival. The following essay is illustrative of how little one of my students learned in this class during these four weeks:

Political bosses were corrupt. No political bosses were corrupt. I think that all they want was money. So they would hire someone who has a lot of money. For example: \$10,000,000 the mayor would hire that person. Lincoln Steffens used bribes to get his ways. "Steffens said that we are fear patriotic.". George Plunkitt has been reading a book by Steffens on The Shame of the Cities. The citizens that they all want money. Steffens says that he's all for money. money is all about getting a job. For example: the mayor would pick the person with a lot of money. So if I had \$1000,000.000,000,000,000 the mayor would hire me for \$200,000,000. Orphanage is a place where kids that don't have a family or a home. (Trailblazer 7, 3/6/2013)

In this essay, Trailblazer 7's mind appears to have remained in fight or flight mode when he wrote this paper. Random information was thrown in here and there.

Little comprehension of the content is demonstrated. The essay lacks any central coherence. After accomplishing so little with this class over the duration of this study I realized that an unsafe learning environment could be one of the greatest deterrents to student learning. The opposite is true as well. I realized that a safe environment could be one of the most crucial prerequisites for successful teaching and learning.

### Insufficient Class Time

The TLH program required students to have sufficient class time to be successful. Yet my students routinely missed class because of individual therapy, group therapy, dental and eye doctor appointments, treatment reviews, and families visiting from out of state. On any given day 10-30% of my class would be absent. This made constant repetition of the previous day an absolute requirement. Having to constantly review material takes up even more class time. The discipline issue, as discussed above, was a contributing factors that significantly detracted from class time. Unexpectedly, positive behavior was a negative contributing factor as well.

While my Trailblazers class struggled with extreme behavioral challenges, my Ravens class had excellent behavior. As a result of their excellent behavior they were rewarded with positive activities including two skiing outings and a service outing. Two of these days happened on computer laboratory days when they were writing their essays. On another of their computer days, I was required to attend a training with short notice. As a result, many of my best students in my highest functioning class only attended two out of the five computer laboratory days. After providing directions to the students this equated to about an hour of computer time. As a result, many of their essays are much

lower in quality than they could have been had they been granted more time.

It was painful for me that my best class, with students that had good behavior, higher self-efficacy and literacy skills, were not provided sufficient class time. While most of my students had sufficient time to complete a rough draft and a final draft, this student's time was too limited. This is his only draft. Consequently, his essay was much lower quality.

Jane Addams had a negative view of immigrants.

Jane Addams thinks that immigrants are "defiant" and she thinks their dancing is "frivolous" and irresponsible. She thinks that dance halls are irresponsible because they just go there to meet girls and to dance with each other inappropriately. She thinks that there should be no dance halls at all.

After reformers found these dance halls inappropriate they started making entertainment for youth like amusement parks.

Jane Addams is talking about an Italian girl and her mother how they moved to America and how the daughter is gonna help her mother out by teaching her how to work things that she is learning how to use for example they would always have to take their bread into town but now all they have to do is cook it in the oven that they have in their house or where ever they are. (Raven 6, 2/28/2013)

His essay lacked a thesis. He applied sourcing by sharing who created each document (Addams), and provided a little close reading, but he did not corroborate or contextualize the documents. He also did not include any discussion of the third document.

I include this issue of class time because education in treatment centers is often a minor priority. There are not many parents who value education that would tolerate their children missing all of their classes once a week to go skiing, ride horses, or complete community service. Yet, these recreation therapy outings are a big selling point to state and school district clients.

## Victories

Despite the failures there were many ways in which the program *did* succeed. When measured according to historical thinking, it was not successful, but when measured according to student growth, it was a significant success.

Perhaps for the first time in a school setting, my students had to make conclusions based on evidence. Although literacy was such a major struggle, they *did* improve in their literacy. Some of them wrote their first essay with a thesis, supporting evidence, and a conclusion. After providing increased scaffolding and time, many students were able to discern the subtexts of the documents.

My Panthers class is comprised of female students who function at a much lower level. Yet, they had very consistent staff, lots of support, and a safe environment that enabled them to focus on their education. Because of this, they were able to learn a lot and become successful in many ways. In fact, one of the best essays was from one of these students. She was able to grasp much of the content and write a short persuasive essay. She enjoyed adequate time to complete a rough draft, review it, and rewrite it. She wrote:

Jane Addams cared about the immigrants but she also judged them.

For example, Jane Addams thought that the immigrants were “frivolous and irresponsible” because the girls and boys were dancing and she thought that was disrespectful. She still cares about them but she still thinks it is disrespectful.

In another example, an immigrant girl learned how to cook and sew at a public school. Jane Addams thought it was a good change for the immigrants because they could be wealthy. She said “The public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing forces.” I think its not good because they would forget about their culture.

Jane Addams cares about the immigrants. She had a party and invited all the immigrants to the party including Jewish people. Jane Addams loved them and would do anything for them. She would teach them how to read and write and how to speak English.

Jane Adams cared about the immigrants but she also judged them. She judged them about the dance halls. She also judged about the change in their life. What I have read Jane Addams is a really caring for her children seems like a kind lady and protective over her boys and girls. (Panther 8, 3/6/2013)

In contrast to the vast majority of my students' essays, this student corroborated from all three documents. As discussed above, she was the only student that was able to reach a more sophisticated understanding of the Addams' character – that she was both caring *and* judgmental. She has a clear thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.

The TLH program also enabled my students to have great class discussions. Students had the opportunities to share their conclusions with the rest of the class. Through class discussions students that struggled with comprehension understood much better. Here is an account from my journal in what may be the most successful moment of the whole project. I shared other segments of this discussion previously in the Findings section.

I started class reviewing the political bosses again. There was still confusion. I really wanted to tell them why Plunkitt's "honest graft" was still corruption and unfair. Instead I bit my tongue and opened it for discussion. I asked who agreed more with Steffens and had students raise their hands and then I called on them:

[Students share their opinions and demonstrate close reading skills] . . .

Then I asked students that agreed with Plunkitt to raise their hands and share their opinion.

A student made the point that he liked Plunkitt better because he was helping his friends and family. Another student made a point that it was not fair to everyone else that wanted a job but could not get one just because they were not his friend or family member.

I thought it was remarkable that they were able to reach good conclusions without me having to tell them exactly what to think. They were able to exercise their own judgment and agency. (Journal, 2013, p. 98-99)

Frequently through the project I felt compelled to tell my students exactly how to think and what to believe about the documents. My perspectives are unfortunately recycled through much of their writing. However, on this particular day I constrained myself, and allowed them to work through the issues themselves. For this particular issue, I wanted my students to know that so-called “honest graft” was not just or fair to the rest of the city. Instead of telling them directly I asked questions and waited for students to work it out. Most of my students seemed to agree that ‘honest graft’ was not fair. They finally realized that it was not fair that they would not be able to get a job solely because they were not connected to the boss. I learned that it was much more effectual to allow the students to work through the ideas themselves without me telling them what to think. This is the brilliance of this program. However, such successes were rare.

This event also demonstrates how my students were deeply concerned with issues of justice as fairness and discrimination. My students criticized Jane Addams for attempting to Americanize Italians, to Christianize Jewish immigrants, and for criticizing immigrant youth for going to dance halls. They were angered by the way Chinese immigrants were treated, they perceived the injustice in the political corruption of the boss system, and they instinctively chose the sides of the steel workers against a powerful oppressive corporation. Although many of them are felons, they think deeply about moral issues. They have a profound capacity to personalize the history in terms of agency and morality. Their life experiences have contributed to a particular awareness of

discrimination and justice as fairness. Perhaps if I had placed a greater emphasis on documents that were more explicitly related to themes of social justice and discrimination it would have made the curriculum more relevant and interesting and students would have been inspired with greater motivation.



## CHAPTER VI

### IMPLICATIONS

In a recent presentation, Wineburg shared that Stanford History Group had reached close to one million downloads of their lesson plans. This seems to be a trend that is accelerating. Stanford History Group also has generous funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Library of Congress. They have the momentum of the common core where some of their language regarding sourcing and multiple texts have been explicitly included (Wineburg, presentation at Brigham Young University, April 8, 2013). As a result of this program and other widespread influences, it is likely that hundreds of thousands of history classrooms will experience significant changes in the near future. My findings suggest that without better forms of scaffolding this may not be an effective form of learning for all types of students.

In the last section, I discussed how the low level of literacy, background understanding, self-efficacy, time, and behavioral instability limited my students' success. In this section, I share a few things that I could have done to make this program more effective. I argue that in my context, teaching with a primary document-centered curriculum is less effective. After this experience I believe that primary document analyses should not be applied as the central means to *teach* content in this context. Rather, they should be applied as a means for students to *demonstrate* and *apply* their understanding. I also discuss the larger systemic problem of education in the treatment center context.

## Improvement

Most of my students have IEPs that include learning, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Traumatic memories haunt them and are triggered as flashbacks. Their families have been severed from them. They struggle with the literacy, limited background knowledge, and low self-efficacy. They are provided limited class time, which is sometimes interrupted by intense acts of violence. Survival in an antagonistic atmosphere becomes a bigger priority. Everyday they experience an oppressive system and routine that coerces and marginalizes them. The cumulative affect of all of these factors can be cognitively paralyzing. Therefore, my students needed an extreme amount of support and scaffolding.

There is more that I should have done. I should have decreased the amount of text in the documents, provided better vocabulary definitions, increased the size of the font, and spent less time on each documentary analysis. It would have been helpful to find documents with shorter and simpler text. I should have been more selective in choosing documents that my students were more familiar with and passionate about. I chose lesson plans that were part of the natural chronological order of US History. Before my study, I applied TLH's lesson plan on Abraham Lincoln that had students investigate the question of "Was Lincoln a racist?" We also did the lesson on the Battle of Little Bighorn. Both lessons experienced a greater amount of engagement. I was disappointed that I failed to apply the lesson on W. E. B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington in time.

I realize now that for my students to have succeeded I should have provided an *extended* amount of engaging input through textbooks, PowerPoints, direct instruction,

and role-plays. This act would have changed the emphasis away from a primary document *centered* curriculum to applying primary document analyses more as capstone projects for each unit.

In the curriculum that I implemented, non-document analysis activities were peripheral and were included only to provide a minimal amount of background understanding. My Ravens class spent thirteen out of seventeen days analyzing documents and writing their papers. The other four days we spent on activities to strengthen their background understanding so that they could analyze the documents. After a couple of weeks my students were tired of analyzing documents. In her reflection, one student complained, “the bad things are that we have to [analyze primary documents] everyday” (Panthers 8, Reflections, 3/8/2013). Such constant focus on analyzing documents creates the illusion that textual analysis is all historians do. In reality, historians thoroughly peruse the secondary literature. They investigate charts, graphs, and other forms of data (Barton, 2005). Most importantly, having such a single focus on primary document analysis limited my ability to provide extended contextual background information. Without significant contextual background, there was not enough scaffolding for my students to succeed.

While my students required an extreme amount of scaffolding, TLH had students apply ‘heuristics’ where they ‘figure it out for themselves.’ However, my students were rarely able to transcend the gap of knowledge that they did not know. They were not able to build content knowledge from the documents themselves. I realized that I was asking them to do a Herculean leap, a sort of spontaneous generation of knowledge. This may work for professional historians, but it was overwhelming for overmedicated,

traumatized, learning-disabled, disinterested, and explosively frustrated, incarcerated youth.

Well-designed curricula consistently and gradually build on themselves. Students learn more effectively when content is taught in a gradual, step-by-step, coherent manner. In contrast, primary documents drop students into a strange new universe. They had little comprehension of the language and the social-culture-historical context. My students were lost at sea on a cloudy day without a map, a compass, stars, or any reference point.

Some have criticized the application of primary documents on the basis that pre-collegiate history should focus on historical content and not the practice of historical thinking. However, such an either/or choice between the skills of the historian and the historical content may be false. Reisman (2012) and Nokes et al. (2007) showed that as students apply historical thinking they learn and retain the content better. If a teacher wants students to learn content well, then they need to find a way for students to apply that knowledge. Useless information is quickly forgotten. TLH is an excellent program to help students apply historical content and historical thinking. It failed in my context as a way for students to learn content. This may have been predictable. My students were not the students that this program was designed for.

Some may argue that these documents required a certain positionality, or a certain socio-economic background. I suspect that students with certain cultural capital would have experienced greater success in analyzing these documents. Again, my students did not understand culturally privileged information such as Sunday worship, stocks, or political corruption. The primary documents that my students appreciate are not

supported by Utah state core curriculum requirements. Those with political power and influence over the US History curriculum in Utah may not value the type of cultural knowledge that my students bring with them to class.

My students are often the children of felons. They inherit disenfranchisement. They are raised without a political voice. The lack of representation from this population has led to a devaluing of their perspective. Therefore, I was forced into the difficult position of choosing material that either followed the state core curriculum or that was more relevant to my students. Perhaps, with such an irrelevant curriculum, significant failure was inevitable. Some would argue that this project indicates that it is not the students that are deficient; it is the system that is deficient. By following the core curriculum I may have privileged certain cultures and marginalized others.

However, I still see value in teaching all students about the progressive era. All of my documents were related to this period in history. It is critical to understand the progressive era in order to understand the society we live in today. Countless laws and reforms were made during this time. The progressive era established a type of faith in progress and in our capacity to change and improve society, which assumption is the basis for so much that we do today. Students need to learn to speak and understand the language and culture that they live in before they can change it. Leaving out core curriculum because it is not culturally relevant to my students would only further disenfranchise them. I still believe that incarcerated youth should analyze primary documents pertaining to the progressive era in their US History classes. However, more work needs to be done to build relevance and scaffolding to allow students in this context to be successful in this undertaking.

### Systematic Changes

This study was intended to focus on the method of applying primary document analysis, but the difficulties of the context limited the success of the program and made the context of the treatment center a more central focus. Although I intended to make the context a peripheral issue, it became a primary issue. The underlying problem was that education was clearly a low priority. The low priority of education resulted in severe behavioral disruptions and limited class time.

The treatment center failed to provide a safe learning environment. My Trailblazers class, made of adolescent males from the sex offenders units, suffered from insufficient staff, undependable staff, a poor facility design where all three units of sex offenders congregate when headed to school, and the admission of multiple severe clients without the corresponding support and assistance. As a consequence, class time more closely resembled *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1963) than a safe therapeutic learning environment. Although violent interruptions usually lasted only ten minutes, the trauma of the interruption continued through the duration of the class period. Violence set students' brains into fight or flight mode and made them distracted, afraid, and criminally excited.

The low priority of education resulted in students missing an enormous amount of class time. Students missed class time for individual therapy, family therapy, treatment reviews, family visits, family outings, dental and eye doctor appointments, and treatment center-sponsored recreational activities. This is a clear statement to teachers and students: education is not that important. In a treatment center it is okay to miss class for

minor reasons.

This creates a pervasive culture where education is viewed not as something vital for future success but as a sort of babysitting for the students. This paradigm even pervades the teachers. In treatment center classrooms, there is often no sense of urgency. Class instruction is broken up by free days, chess games, hours of silent reading each week, and multiple movies. Teachers are required to complete a large amount of reports and phone calls, for which there is strict accountability. There is not an equal amount of scrutiny for the actual teaching in class. Despite these weaknesses, according to our corporate director of education, who is over hundreds of other facilities, our education program is one of the best. I cannot imagine what other education programs are like.

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## APPENDIXES

## Appendix A: Edited Analytic Autoethnographic Journal

Feb 4, 2013

Ravens

I taught the homestead strike today. For this project I showed 10 slides. The slides included Rockefeller, Carnegie, and two good political cartoons: one of an octopus with Standard Oil written on a barrel which was the top of the octopus' head, and another of a pig trying to steal the whole earth with a poor small man trying to stop the pig. Of course they are intensely biased but they show how many people saw these corporations.

I also tried to explain vertical and horizontal integration. I did not have a good slide. I could have explained it better just by writing on the white board. I got the sense that no one understood it. I should have just left it out.

I also did a short role-play. I had one student be a small town pump station owner. Another student represented standard oil came in and offered to buy the business and threatened to run him out of business if he did not sale. The student refused to sale his small pump business. Standard oil opened up a new station across the street and offered half the price, even though they lost money, to drive them out of business. Students thought this strategy was clever. I emphasized how unfair it was.

Then I went over the timeline. This was 20 minutes into class and by this point I had obviously lost the attention of most of my students. I started calling on individual students to explain what I just read from the timeline.

Finally with about 25 minutes left of class I passed out the documents related to the Homestead Strike. There were only two questions for the homestead act on the worksheet. It did not provide enough scaffolding for my students.

Some students refused to work in groups. Some students refused to stop reading novels.

I put the class into three groups. The staff were not helpful. They were not working with any of the other students, so I jumped from group to group as much as I could. One student who refused to work in a group showed me his paper after five minutes he had

written one sentence for each answer. I realized that was not going to work. I made a class announcement that everyone needed to write at least four sentences.

He came back another ten minutes later.

I explained the analysis of primary documents in detail in previous lessons, but as I was circulating the class it was obviously apparent that they did not get it. I think I need to really go over each step of sourcing, corroboration, contextualization and close reading.

Most of my students totally agreed with Goldman on the side of the workers against the management. They thought she was the most reliable. In her account it seems like to me that she was not even there. Her bias is huge as she talks about workers as “strong Americans, men of decision and grit, who stood up for their rights.” And “Their tone was manly, ringing with the spirit of their rebellious forebears of the Revolutionary War.”

She insisted that “the Pinkertons had opened fire, without warning, killing a number of Homestead men on the shore, among them a little boy, and wounding scores of others.”

She states this but she gives nothing to back up his account. Where is she getting this evidence from? One might sympathize with the workers more, but this account has no factual basis. My students do not realize that.

I will need to go over this tomorrow.

Student 13 wrote:

“Goldman baimed the compony for not give beter pay and closing the mills. Frick blamed for requesting outrages pays. Goldman blamed the Pinkertons for shooting first. Fricks blamed the strickers for shooting first.”

This student provides a good discussion of the different viewpoints in each document, but fails to find any clues in judging the reliability between each claim.

“Goldman [is more believeable] because she is a outsider that does not want to mak any side look beter, Because workers stand up for thier rights. Because I would stand up for what I bleave in.”

This student does not realize that Goldman has her own political agenda, and just because she believes in it, that does not make it legitimate.

Student 6 wrote:

“Goldman was kinda fair but Fricks was a evil man it sounds like. emma Goldman liked the union but not industrys.”

Student 11 wrote:

“Goldman Thinks That The Works Were Strong and Good People.  
Frick Thinks That They Were Bad People And They Were Getting Paid To Much.”

“Goldman’s [is more believable] Because She Has More Reasonable Answers And Her’s Is More Beleaveble.  
And She Is Thinks More About Whats Inside A Person.  
And She’s Against The Company.”

In these documents one can see how there is no discussion about sourcing, or close reading. They easily recognize the bias of Fricks, but they fail to detect any bias in Goldman. My students automatically identify with the worker, the downtrodden, the lower class, and they are automatically skeptical of authority, management, and those in power. For them, the fact that she wrote the document forty years later, and was not there is irrelevant.

#### Trailblazers

Class was a disaster. They arrived to class ten minutes late. It took a few minutes for 10 students to sit down. They started to yell at each other. One student started yelling at another student that he loved to “Fuck boys.”

The other boy responded by coming over trying to beat him up. I stood in front of him. He kept trying to get around me. The other boy would not stop saying things to provoke him. Instead of trying to beat him up he walked right out of class. Then another student started swearing and yelling at another student. I told him he could stay in class if he stopped acting out. He continued acting out so I told him he had to leave. He would not leave. His peers began persuading him to take a time out and get calm and come back. He finally left and did not come back.

After these episodes were finally over it was about 25 minutes into class and I had hardly been able to teach anything.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students wanted to learn and pay attention but they were not able to.

I quickly went through the slides and did the standard oil role play. They enjoy role plays – but half the students were not listening.

By this time there were only 6 students left so I combined us into one group – I assigned another student as leader of the group and we began reading. We only had ten minutes left at this point.

Before the class had come I managed to make a more extensive worksheet, that provided much more scaffolding, to help student source, and cooberate better.

During this discussion one student asked an interesting question “Why did she write this?” (student 5) Another student responded with “She wanted the big businesses to look bad.” (student 4). I thought – wow they are really getting it – that this document was written to persuade us to believe certain things. That these things are not neutral.

I’m off to a rough start.

Tomorrow I will need to review the heuristics basics. And then we will go over these documents together as a class. They need to realize that a lady writing 40 years who was

not there, may not have talked to anyone that was there, has no factual basis for telling the story. How does she know who shot the first shot?

### Panthers

Panthers arrived about 5 minutes late. One of my students insisted on talking to a staff before she would sit down while I was trying to start class. We reviewed what we had discussed about the Industrial revolution in a previous lesson. We reviewed quickly machines and the steam engine.

Then we did a strike role play. We talked about unions and strikes and strikebreakers. This calls is a much lower level and I had to go slower and easier. Then I passed out the documents. We read all through "Goldman's" article. We read it through as a class which was 6 students. They seemed to understand well that Goldman's purpose was to praise the workers and demonize the factory owner. We will have to read the second document tomorrow.

Feb 5

### Ravens

I reviewed the basics of working as a historian today. I used a good powerpoint and talked about evidence. I compared it to police investigation. Then we went through the documents and we talked about sourcing and contextualization and corroboration. The previous week the students read two accounts of Homestead Strike. One was written by Henry Frisk the man managing the factory in behalf of Andrew Carnegie. The other is an anarchist named Emma Goldman. Most of my students agreed with her. I explained why her account was unreliable: she was not there, she had no first hand knowledge, and she wrote about it almost forty years later.

I asked the question "What would we need to know more about what really happened?" One student said we would need a worker who was not in the union or a neutral observer. It's a good point. I doubt its possible however – it was the middle of the night, not too many people I would think would just be standing around unless they are on one side or the other.

I asked again "So what source is more reliable?"

A student still said it was Goldmans (student 14).

I asked something like "Who do you guys think is to blame for the fight?"

A student said "The guards. They shot first."

I said "But remember we can't rely on that source. This lady wrote it 40 years later and she was not even there. She provides no evidence for the truthfulness of her account."

I feel frustrated that they really don't get it. I am also frustrated with this lesson plan. It provides two primary docs, they are both completely biased, and the other is fabricated 40 years later. Is the purpose just to teach students that we cannot know at all what



happened in the past. I wish they included a 3<sup>rd</sup> source that was more reliable. I am going to search for one.

#### Trailblazers

Many students were acting out today. There are a couple of students who were swearing and threatening each other and provoking each other. They kept flipping each other off when they thought no one was looking and then the peer that was flipped off would jump out of his seat to beat the other peer up. It is only 3 or 4 students depending on the day, the other six students are pretty good. It really makes it impossible to teach everyone though. Often we have to go through a 20 minute time period of acting out before we settle down enough to start learning. It has been this way for a couple of weeks. It is a really difficult time to try to implement this teaching method.

Today was very frustrating. I have a lesson I want to teach and I want them to learn but they were acting out so intensely that I was only able to teach for about half the time.

I did not get through the powerpoint until there were about 7 minutes left of class. I passed out the documents and the worksheet for them to work on some more. The ravens are already done, but the trailblazers are just getting started.

I don't know how to get a better handle on this class. They start acting out the moment they walk in to class. Tomorrow I am going to have a song ready on the guitar. This often calms them down. We will sing a song. Then we will have a few minutes of 'mindfulness' with our sparks program. Mindfulness is strategy where students close their eyes and relax. The purpose is to try to help them come out of fight or flight mode. And then I think I will have to have students work just as individuals because they continue to act out when we work in groups or as a whole class. Once I feel much more in control we will try working as a whole class again.

There is a flu going around and I'm sick. I'm also really tired. I feel discouraged. I do not feel like I am connecting with these students. I am not getting them to actually think about evidence.

#### Panthers

Today the panthers class went okay. They have had good behavior lately. They are just not really engaged. For example I read a line "The Carnegie Company enjoyed great wealth." Then I asked what does that mean? Someone said they were poor. I said no it is the opposite. She said it means they were rich. I asked why does she include this in here? I waited for silence. Maybe I did not wait enough. But this slows my class down so much and my students really lose focus. But they were already not focused. It is frustrating because most of them really were staring off into space. I called on specific students by name and they did not have any idea what we were talking about. I kept calling on them but what can you do when all six of them are not listening.

Student 5 who was the only one that seemed to really understand what was going on. But then during the last 15 minutes of class she decided she was not going to be involved any more and she began tearing up her work in small pieces. I have no idea what triggered her. She started swearing, acting belligerent, and would only swear at us when we asked her why she was acting out.

My students in this class do not write anything unless I write it on the projector and they copy it word for word. I have a long ways to go before I can get them to write a paper all on their own.

Almost every class today was extremely rough. I am feeling discouraged.

Feb 6

Ravens

I did another lesson with the ravens – the Chinese exclusion act. I really liked this lesson. Instead of having a document that was worthless in providing evidence about the actual event, this one provided four documents that inform us. I really liked how they were different types of documents – a political cartoon, a play, a speech, and an autobiography. They showed different perspectives, different purposes, and they all had evidence.

This is like looking at a 3 dimensional object from many different views. It is not just about contradiction, rather it gives greater depth of the issues.

This student 6 failed to see how the Chinese Autobiography contradicted all of the other evidence. For this third document he wrote “The Chinese is better and Faithful and is Not a cheap *Now*.” With his emphasis in the *now* he interpreted this document as much later and he thinks that the Chinese behavior suddenly changed from being a cheap laborer to being expensive. He does not realize that the documents are talking about the same time period.

Student 12 filled out the worksheet but I don’t think he read all of the documents. For the Chinese autobiography document he wrote “there is an overPoPulation of Chinese in California.” This documents does not say anything about too many Chinese workers in California, instead it argues for the right to bring wives and become patriotic citizens.

Student 9 wrote “they are exploring that the white man are very violent withe the Chinnesse” This account seems to show that the student saw that the fault was more with the white’s prejudice, than with the Chinese worker bringing down low wages.

Some students seem to kind of get it – I feel like I need to make it really explicit for all of them. I think I need to make another worksheet and we can have a class discussion tomorrow to really make this explicit.

Many of my students did not know how to support their conclusions with evidence. I am going to have to talk about quotations and evidence. I am going to make a worksheet that will ask multiple questions about each document. These worksheets simply need *more* scaffolding for my students. My students often think that if they write one line for each document then they are done. They have not done enough to dig deeper and explore more. I suspect other students would often be similar also.

### Trailblazers

Another rough class session. The same three students were either kicked out or taken out. This is three days in a row. This time I gave them their worksheets and tried to get them going on task right away so that they would not immediately start fighting. However, I would not let one of the students into my classroom until he agreed that he was going to be appropriate, so I was talking with him outside my door and while I did so 2 of my students started fighting. Things settled down quicker though. Two students (student 9 & 6) did not complete any work. They messed around and provoked and distracted his peers.

Three students worked when I was helping them directly. They hardly would read at all unless I was standing over them – and I pointed to the paragraph and said read this one. “I can’t find it” (student 3)

“You need to read the paragraph”

I already read it

Read it again

Student reads it aloud and finds the answer. He explains it to me. I tell him to write it down. I come back ten minutes later after helping other peers. He still has not written it down. Says he does not know what to write. I have him read again, explain it to me again and then he finally writes it. Part of the issue is so many of my students significantly lack self-efficacy. They don’t think that they can do it right, but they also don’t want to. I think that living in a treatment center – where 90% of your day is planned, where you have very little choice and freedom, it just has a way of breaking your will and desire to do anything. You lose your agency over any aspect of your life. I don’t know what a better alternative would be though, since they are a danger to themselves and to society.

One student, (8) did his work and was on task the whole time. He completed his worksheet (homestead act that my other classes finished yesterday).

I created a new worksheet. On this worksheet I asked the same questions but I also included much more questions as scaffolding so that they could build up to a correct conclusion.

11. Whose claim is more believable? Why? (four sentences)

Student 8 wrote: “Frick’s because it was two days after the incident. He was writing An newspaper article About the incident. Goldman’s is 39 years later, Not two days later.”

He did not include a discussion of evidence. I talked about sourcing but I should have included on the worksheet an explicit discussion about evidence. They really failed to see how the Goldman account is not evidence at all.

Feb 7

I'm feeling overwhelmed. I spent all my free time yesterday working on my computer. I could not get it to work. I have precious little time to waist. I got a second job – an online curriculum job. I am trying to teach, get my masters degree, teach piano lessons, work my online curriculum job, pay all of the bills on my income alone so that my wife does not have to work, be a good husband and father, and also stay involved in my church. I have precious little free time. And I spent all afternoon trying to fix my computer.

Its strange that we do not expect the seasons and our pressures at home to affect us. Public schools were created soon after the industrial revolution hit America. Our schools are influenced by the industrial revolution. The practical skills are constantly being emphasized; work skills without anything for the soul. It is an education run by bells (thankfully we do not have bells at our school), hard desks and hard surfaces (thankfully we have padded chairs and tables that I think are much more conducive to a therapeutic environment), and the separation of subjects in an almost assembly line-type of learning. And then there is a strong sense that regardless of what happens in weather or whatever time of year – school must continue. This is especially true at our school. The train was built with this same conception. Time is money. We cannot loose time or we are loosing profit. So rather than our lives being governed by the natural rhythms of the seasons and of daylight, our lives are governed by the clock and the calendar.

Ravens

I reviewed the documents with the class today. I felt like they were listening and paying attention. The students read the documents yesterday so they had things to say about them. It turned into a pretty good discussion. From the papers they wrote there were various results. Some came up with conclusions that had no basis in the documents. Some had logical conclusions but they did not share the evidence. A couple of students shared logical conclusions and included the documentary evidence to support their ideas. It is not in the depth or amount of discussion that I am wanting. None of my students included the point that the Chinese may have actually been better paid. In reality they were not lowering the wages. In truth they were just better workers and therefore intense competition for jobs. That is what I really wanted and no one included that.

Many students are simply not paying attention and they are missing important material that I explained. There is still a problem of paying attention, having self-control, and staying engaged in school even when working with primary documents. After the discussion I showed them how to introduce a quote, use quotation marks, and explain

where the quotation is from. By this time most of the students were not listening and this is a skill they continued to struggle with even until their essay.

### Trailblazers

Today we were missing a few students. They came into class quietly. There were only 6 students. We separated into two groups of three. I read with one group and I had one group read with another staff. After a few minutes she just left.

They each read a historical comic book that was related to industrialization or cities – they chose to read *The Great Chicago Fire of 1871* by Kay Melchisedech Olsen and *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire* by Michale Burgan.

The students were really engaged and on task most of the time. One group finished way before the other. I started them writing in their own words what happened. One of them got upset and walked out. The other simply refused to work. One of them wrote three lines. He was supposed to write half a page.

The other group did not finish until the very end.

### Panthers

Two out of five students actively participated. They really participated though. We began the Chinese Exclusion. Again they only wrote exactly what I wrote. They do not really get what they are looking for. But they can read the basic ideas. I had to interpret the play for them, but they were able to understand most of the political cartoon.

It took us the entire class period to look at these two documents and then to write down conclusions.

Tomorrow we'll read document C & D.

Feb 8

### Ravens

I split students up into 4 groups and they read graphic novels related to industrialization.

After the groups read the stories they summarized the stories to the whole class and then they shared how they related to industrialization. They were great stories in that they illustrated some of the city problems that people had to deal with, with the emergence of industrialization. On Monday I think I will start class with writing question like "What new laws did they have to make with rise of industrialized cities?"

This will be a good intro to analyze the primary docs related to the boss system and the graft system and the speech related to "an honest graft."

I should have had each student write his own summary and then his own answer to how the story related to industrialization. I decided to just have a class discussion and consequently there were a lot of students who were not involved and not participating.

#### Trailblazers

The disciplinary problems were so intense that they held back three of the students that have been continuous problems. As a result class was really good today. They worked on the Chinese Exclusion act in two groups and one student worked individually. Some of them finished. Think I will start a class discussion on Monday at the beginning of class and read through document D – Chinese immigrant autobiography because this one really makes us reconsider many of the ideas we thought from the previous documents.

#### Panthers

They participated through the beginning to about halfway. There is one student that seems to really get it, but she is not part of the study. My other students really struggle, so much of it is over their head. They also just have a short attention span, and so after discussing this for like 20 minutes their minds are definitely somewhere else.

Student 6 wrote “Because there are mistreated because they are hardworkers and if they wanted to they can sell all of there jobs like the snap of the fingers”

Student 8 “The white men’s treated the Chinese men like krap because they worked harder then white man and taking over the whitemens Job.”

Feb 11

#### Ravens

Today we watched *America: The story of US* – a history channel documentary. I think that it is pretty well done. A lot of the violence is too graphic. It makes me cringe. It is not the violence itself but when I think of my students enjoying and thinking about the violence. My students love violence. I wonder if violence should be portrayed at all. History is full of violence. I often will talk about violence in graphic detail just to get my students attention. Almost all of my students were engaged in the move (except 1). I stopped the movie multiple times to ask questions and add details. It often drives my students nuts when I pause and talk about things – my students want to watch something and let their minds turn off, they use movies as opportunities for escape. Movies in this way is like drug. They indulge in it just to forget about life and forget about your problems. I believe in watching movies to explore life; to analyze life; to see and understand more about life. I may be naïve but quality foreign films help me understand more about distant places and cultures than almost anything else.

This episode was all about cities. I really wanted to connect the idea about industrialization creating huge cities, and how because of the growth of these huge

unregulated cities they then needed to clean up the cities, and make new laws. They faced, crime, poverty and sanitation issues. It shows how individuals worked to solve these problems. It was very engaging. This will provide a lot of conceptual background to the primary documents that we are going to be reading relating to bosses, muckrakers, women's rights, workers rights, Mexican rights etc.

I was able to ask questions and receive lots of quality answers. They were connecting it to their prior learning – especially regarding to the graphic novel books that they read last class.

I stopped the documentary with five minutes left of class and had students answer 8 questions. None of my students finished all 8 questions. I am terrible time manager. I *always* want to go over. There is never enough time to cover what I want – I always over plan, which may be a good thing because there is always so much to cover but it is a bad thing when I rush through material or only get halfway through material. But I cannot stand wasting five minutes. I should have had students answer the questions with 10 minutes to go – and then if everyone finished I could have turned the doc on for a couple of more minutes. One student even reminded me. I did not want to stop it right then because he told me that it was time. My selfish pride kicked in and I told him that I would stop the doc in a minute. I stopped in 3-4 minutes and then it took a minute or two to pass out pens and paper.

Some of the pens were not working. This is a constant problem – we only can use “bendy pens” three-inch pens that are bendable so that one cannot as easily stab another. It is just another conflict to deal with at the school. You finally get a kid that hates school and hates to write in the classroom and he tries to do his work and his pen won't write. So you get him another pen, and that one does not write, so you get him another pen and that one writes half the time. Every time it stops he needs to scribble on the side of his paper to get it to write again – so there is often scribbles on the side of his paper and it often tears his paper. Are there better pens out there somewhere?

### Trailblazers

We went over the Chinese Immigrant primary documents again today. I started off by asking the class what we were learning about last Friday. There was a long pause. One student said Native Americans.

Nope. That was a couple of weeks ago. Remember those papers that you guys were reading? What were they about?

I called on a couple of students specifically. It took a few more minutes and a few more guesses before some said “Chinese immigrants.”

Its kind of frustrating. This is supposed to be more engaging but they cannot even remember what it is about. How are they supposed to remember and analyze facts and compare and contrast them when they don't even remember the general subject?

I asked them more questions and they started to remember the facts – white workers disliked Chinese workers, they said it was because Chinese workers worked for really cheap.

We went through the documents one by one. I asked lots of questions – what do you guys remember from this document? A few students volunteered and had thoughtful answers. Student 8 shared answer after answer – he understands much better than the rest. This is a relief that at least one student kind of gets it – but it is also a handicap because I will have a tendency to keep turning to that one student. I called on multiple students. They had short attention spans. They have all experienced trauma and I often feel like it is so difficult for their minds just to calm down. It feels like it is so hard to get them to wake up and start thinking but then once they do their minds go into overdrive, they get super agitated, they have flashbacks, they start getting really angry, they will even start laughing and provoking peers, I've seen this happen knowing that a crash is going to happen at any moment.

When I finally got to doc D (Chinese immigrant autobio) one student quoted word for word what he had read (student 2). He said that they were actually excellent and faithful workers. He had a lot of good points.

I want all of the students to write but I did not think that they knew how to write about this so I wrote a paragraph showing them how to include a quotation. By that point I had completely lost the attention of the entire class.

Students were frustrated, I was frustrated. I told them that I wanted them to write in their own words. I passed out all the pencils and papers. At this point there was about 8 minutes left of class. Not one student wrote down one word. By the time I showed them how to write I had already completely lost their attention. I called on them by name, and told them to sit up but they just ignored me. They have about a 10 minute attention span. I have been trying to promote this class discussion for about 40. Although I think I did a good job at not personally talking the whole time, I only talked about 2/3 of the time, these students do not engage in a class discussion well. I was walking around the room constantly, talking with my hands, speaking with enthusiasm, asking questions, calling on students directly, but it was simply too long.

Tomorrow we will start off with this activity. I need to have my student write. They need to write. I believe that students learn the most not just by reading, but by writing. I will give them all of the documents again. We may work on this paper the whole class period tomorrow.

We are supposedly not to use any force unless danger is imminent. But if we cannot maintain control, danger will be imminent. If students are not 'hurting' anyone and we therefore can't touch them, what is to stop them from walking out of class into any class that they want to. What is to prevent them from interrupting every class. It is this weird line that has always been unclear to me. It makes it sound like we are breaking the law every time we touch a student when he is not beating someone up.



## Panthers

We watched the documentary. We did not get very far. Things always just take longer with this class. I have to spend more time explaining things and talking about things. I don't think that they really got it.

2/12/13

## Ravens

It was rough day with the Ravens. It is amazing the difference that one student can make. I have student who is usually right on task and usually steps up as a leader to share comments. He is smart and when he shares more people participate and seem to get it. Instead lately he has chosen to be really negative. Instead of being involved he is acting out, talking off task and really undermining teaching. Another student stepped up and shared in class instead.

I tried another primary document analysis. This lesson really follows the set pattern of sourcing, contextualization, close reading, and then corroboration. To teach these I made a separate worksheet with a venn diagram to do corroboration. Then I had on the back of that for students to write their conclusion. It will only be two pages.

After doing this I don't feel like it points well to the actual evidence. Using these tools we don't seem to get any content.

This primary document analysis was about political bosses. It includes an excerpt from a muckraker and then from a political boss. I opened with a short explanation about political bosses. I did a short role play where I had one student pretend he was a political boss.

I think they are excellent documents. But I could not get my students engaged. I asked questions. I had them read the text. They did not learn much. There was very little engagement. I asked lots of questions. I continued to call on students individually.

We got through the first document. I posted my answers on the projector and students copied. I wrote the answers that they told me. I think next class will be better because I will be able to allow them to work on their own and study it out for themselves. Then I will provide the venn diagram and then the persuasive paper for them to work on.

It was a frustrating class period. I don't feel like it was very productive for my students. Maybe I need to lecture more. My students do learn more when I do this. They take notes and ask questions. There is a lot more engagement. This is significantly less effective for me lately.

I feel like the primary documents are good excerpts. But I feel like the cultural gap of knowledge is too great. There is the major gap of understanding with many of the basic words. Maybe I need to provide more background information. Maybe I need to make the reading shorter.

### Trailblazers

Today we worked on our writing assignment. Four of my students worked on these some more. All of the rest of the class refused to work. Many just did not get it. They did not get it because they really were not listening and paying attention when we went over the documents.

Student 3 did not do any work. He kept insisting that he did not understand. We read through parts of document D together. As we read through it I underlined a couple of phrases. I did not get a chance to see his paper until after he left. Apparently he thought he was just supposed to write the words that I underlined.

“Cheap labor cry was always a falsehood. highest market price, excellent and Faithful workers.”

It sounds like some encrypted riddle. Apparently he thought this was a persuasive paragraph. Yesterday I wrote a persuasive paragraph as an example it took me about five minutes. I included my own statement. I supported it with another quote. I introduced the quote. He put random words directly off the document and believed that he completed the assignment. I feel like there is hardly any engagement from this student. It is almost like I am speaking a foreign language. It is almost like I come from a different cultural universe that he completely does not understand. I think the key limiting factor is that he is intensely struggling with some severe sexual issues that detract the majority of his focus and attention away from everything almost all the time.

### Panthers

Class time was shared with a cancer presentation. A staff shared how his wife passed away of cancer 18 months ago. Many students became really emotional as we watched a family slide show that showed the family and the wife getting her chemo treatment. It was really sad and also inspiring that he is engaging in a good cause. It took up class time. We spent the other part of class going through more of the history channel documentary.

### Feb 13

This is a curriculum day. We get a curriculum day once every other month. We met as a whole education department for about an hour. Teachers expressed frustration about so many things to do. About half the teachers are special ed certified so they are working on IEPs but we all have to contribute to the IEPs. We are also expected to email 5 therapists each week and make 8 phone call homes. We also have to write a report on every single student every six weeks. We all have to help out with hall duty during hall transition

times once or twice a day (students are not just allowed to roam the halls freely, they walk in line, with their hands behind their back (usually), only when the halls are clear – usually the boys groups will go, then the girls groups will go one after another, then the aspergers unit, and sex offenders unit. It is quite an ordeal to try to get students through all of the halls without seeing each other. There is lesson planning. There are grade book and attendance requirements. We also receive speech therapy assignments. They pay for a speech therapist once a month per student. To supplement this learning they have teachers do a one-on-one assignment with students. Our classes are supposed to remain academically vigorous but we also have a life skills program where every month we teach a lesson about *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey. We take turns making a school newsletter and we all have to mail out all of the progress report cards with a newsletter each month and at the end of a term we have to mail out final report cards. We are supposed to constantly give out ‘habit’ bucks when students are on task. We are also supposed to start each class with ‘Sparks’ sensory experience. We are supposed to play a song, have students engage in silent deep breathing, or have students engage in something that creates a sensation of physical sensation. This physical sensation is supposed to help them come out of their trauma fight or flight mode. Needless to say our time in the classroom is constantly widdled away. As a history teacher I am also supposed to do silent reading for the first 10 minutes of class. As a teacher at a treatment center it is very difficult to have time to prepare great lesson plans. In the classroom it is very difficult to even have the time to teach students.

I can understand the desire with trying to teach students about character development. Without character development students will not succeed in life. They need to be taught things like honesty, hard work, responsibility, making and accomplishing goals, working in teams, etc. In previous times in America they had students learn lessons character development as they were learning to read. They also learned character in the home and in church. Many history lessons had moral lessons at the end of class. Today such ideas are often dismissed as ethnocentric. As a consequence our students are simply not taught values in school. The only value that students are consistently taught is tolerance. This is an important attribute and one that they really struggle with. There are many incidents of blatant prejudice against certain races, sexual orientations, and religions. But they also lack the basic principles of honest – telling the truth, working hard, taking responsibility.

There are extremely high drop out rates for boys. Boys often do not identify with education. Many groups of boys are receiving *less* education. Boys tell me everyday – “I hate school”. They refuse school and will sit on the unit. They claim that they will easily become a lumberjack, or a mechanic, or construction worker. They claim that they have it all figured and therefore don’t need any extra education. I keep pleading with them to go to college or go to a trade school. I keep insisting that they need something extra.

After the education meeting we met as a history department for another 50 minutes. There are 3 other history teachers. All of us are teaching other classes in addition to teaching history. Three of us are teaching math classes. One of us is teaching English.

We talked about lesson plan ideas. In the next couple months we hope to get from industrialization to about WWII. We say we teach the state core standards. I don't think any of us has ever reached the entire way through all the state core standards. Sometimes it is blatantly our fault. We will take our time on hobby subjects. A few years ago, one of the teachers spent six months just on WWII. Another teacher is saying that students already know about WWII and so she is going to completely skip it. There is not a lot of accountability in exactly what or how we teach inside our classrooms. We don't have to deal with state testing. In the 4 ½ years that I have taught here I have had my principle in my room to observe me teach 1 time.

History teachers will always struggle with the sheer volume of material there is to cover. We will always struggle with deciding what things to include and what to leave out. We will always struggle with how to tell the story of America.

Yesterday I vented to my wife about my frustrations with this project. At this point, it is fair to say that it is an utter failure. My students do not get it. They are not learning the material. They are not forming conclusions. In the public schools this is supposedly a more effective way to teach.

[I can still contest this. In the Reisman study, he self-selected teachers that would participate by those that showed up at a special training. Those that did not show up were the control group. This way of selecting the participants and control group may have created a self-fulfilling prediction. The best teachers, the ones most interest in improvement, are the teachers that are most likely to show up at an optional training.]

Regardless my students are learning a fraction of what they usually learn. I realized that I need to improve the scaffolding. Students are not making the giant leap of writing a persuasive paragraph, analyzing the evidence, and learning the content. These lesson plans do not provide enough structure. I need to make worksheets that ask lots of individual particular questions.

It is frustrating how helpless many of my students act. They won't read the material and share many of their own thoughts and opinions about it. They are in a system where everything is constantly dictated to them. Every moment, every minute of everyday almost is constantly dictated to them. If they refuse then they will often be coerced. They are allowed very little preference and choice. They have to count off in line order with their hands behind their back. One of the main things that it teaches them is to be passive. They are not taught initiative. They have very little opportunity to use their own will and creativity. The system I think is breaking them. Consequently when I give them an assignment where they have to think for themselves, it is a difficult and painful process. They want me to tell them the answer. Its really sad.

Also many of them are lower functioning. I have students well below the average IQ. I have one of these students that is below 70. She is in a history class with other girls that have IQs around 85. She can read words with 3-4 letters. She needs a class that teaches

her how to bath, and cook and buy things at a store. She is sitting in my class instead listening to industrialization. I wonder how much she is actually learning.

Also many of these documents require lots of historical and cultural knowledge. They don't know the vocabulary. They have no visual representations of what many of these words mean. There is often very little schema to connect this material. It is foreign and strange and irrelevant.

So I am going to create worksheets that provide greater scaffolding. I am also going to provide more background knowledge through engaging powerpoints and documentaries. When I show these – they tend to be much more engaging. Most of the class is listening during a powerpoint discussion – and very few are listening during a primary document analysis. I think I also need to do less talking. I have been trying so hard to teach the skills of the historian – but maybe I just need to make high quality worksheets that take them through it step by step.

I think the best theory for education is complexity theory. I am so overwhelmed. These processes are so complicated. There are so many factors. These are things that you cannot summarize on a simple data sheet. You cannot quantify all of these factors. For this reason, I think that quantitative methods have very little relevance to the classroom – especially the treatment center classroom. For this reason I am glad that I am using more qualitative research methods.

Feb 14

Ravens

The Ravens class went well. We are working on Political Bosses. I gave them worksheets that included the questions from the Stanford curriculum. Still some of the questions they did not understand because they lacked the background understanding. For example many students struggled to understand the statement “the president . . . who agrees to use air-brakes only if he is given stock in the air-brake company.” The question I put on the worksheet to try to help students figure this out was “Why would the president of a railroad only use air-breaks if he has stock in the air-brake company?” They did not know what air-brakes were. They did not know what it means to own stock. I should have added those definitions. But even still if they understood that it meant that they would not buy air-breaks unless he was a part owner of the air-brake company, a lot of students would struggle to make the connection that it is because only then will it be profitable. These connections I need to make explicit. But lately it seems like when we go over a document as a class and I can make these connections explicit, I lose the attention of most of my class.

I circulated the room constantly helping students. There were often three students asking for help at the same time. The staff that are there rarely help students. There are adult staff in the classroom, but they don't understand the material well. I get the feeling that

they don't feel confident enough to help students because they might embarrass themselves by not knowing how to do the work.

I also passed back the papers I corrected on the Chinese Exclusion act. I taught individual students how to use quote marks when to put an apostrophe before and 's' and when to use they're, their, and there. The most common mistake was the lack of evidence. Students stated their opinion, but they did not have anything to back it up.

In the ravens class the vast majority of students were participating except for one. They were helping each other, working in groups and in pairs, and asking for help when they were stuck. I still feel like they do not really get the distinction between an honest graft and a dishonest graft that Plunkitt was trying to make. I think I will do a role play to show how this works tomorrow. I will have someone be a political boss. I will have poor workers. I will have a new orphanage roof that needs to be repaired.

### Trailblazers

This class today was a disaster. Right at the beginning of class the students were complaining that it was valentines and that they should not have to do any work. Tomorrow will be Friday and they will also be complaining about having to work on a Friday. Yesterday they did not work because it was a Teacher preparation day, but they want to have a break the next two days. There is often this drag, this weight, where it seems so hard for students to get on task. Doing anything is difficult for them. Students do not want to get out of their chair to get a pencil. They try to find every reason not to do work. I wonder what causes this. I think it is related to being in a system and constantly being coerced and having few if any choices. It probably has a lot to do with depression and dealing with the trauma that they have experienced. It probably has a lot to do with the desire they feel for defiance. It is a way of getting us back.

So I decided to try to do something fun for them. I was going to tell them the story of Romeo and Juliet for the first ten minutes and then we would work. As soon as I started, one student saw another student spinning a jack. He yelled "Hey that's my top." The student denied it. The other student grabbed the cup of pencils and threw it at him and said a lot of explicit profane things about the student and his mother. It surprised me because it was so disproportionate. He was verbally and physically assaulted and his crime was spinning his jack. The student with the jack sat there as I steered the other student out. But then he stood up to go after him. The first student went out in the hall and the staff stayed with the other student. I stood in front of the door so the other student would not go after him. I tried to reason with him. I said "I know you are really angry. Those are really mean things he said. Remember you are here to work on dealing with the anger that you feel in appropriate ways. You have a right to feel angry. But we need to learn how to control our anger in ways that are appropriate. He started walking around the room trying to break things. Staff finally arrived and started talking with him and then I took the rest of the student into the library so that they could process with

him. I finished the story in the library. I passed out pens and then gave out the worksheet. (student 5 & 6)

I tried to explain the worksheet but the rest of the class was starting to act out. Two members of the class began working on the worksheet. The rest of the class refused. They pushed the papers on the floor. They looked at comic books. They started hitting each other with comic books. While they were hitting each other with comic books on the floor and refusing to sit in chairs the CEO walked in with a client to show how nice our school was. I'm sure he was not impressed with my classroom management.

It finally became stable enough where I could help the two students that were doing the worksheet. One of the questions is "Why does Steffens talk about Sunday and the Fourth of July?" The statement by Steffens is "Oh, we are good – on Sunday, and we are "fearfully patriotic" on the Fourth of July."

Two students said they did not get it (3&9). I asked what do many people do on Sundays. One of them said he did not know. The other said they go to church. Then I asked what do many people do on the Fourth of July. They responded that they have a big party and look at fireworks. I asked why? What are they celebrating? I don't know. They are having a party. I asked what is important about the Fourth of July? One of them asked is it when the Statue of Liberty was built?

I waited for them to think and then asked other questions. But they lacked the background knowledge of church and Independence Day, so this statement had no meaning for them. They did not know what the word "hypocrite" means and they lacked the background knowledge to understand that this is what Steffens was calling the typical American businessman.

Student 3 who is African American was also picking on another student (student 2) because he is gay and he identifies with a different gender. I asked why he was acting out today. He said last night and this morning a certain student had called him a "Nigger". I told him that I was sorry. That was a terrible thing to do. But that did not make it right for him to channel that negative energy against another student.

This class is really hard for me right now. It is definitely my most difficult class. They have really low maturity levels. During the cancer presentation last Tuesday I was surprised to see the lack of empathy. I did not hear any students express sorrow for the staff's who had lost his wife. Instead all of their attention was focused on acquiring new cancer awareness bracelets. There is hatred in society of child molesters. A recent law in Utah is making it so a convicted child molester cannot serve on the education board. My students are victims and perpetrators. The trauma they have experienced holds back their maturity several years, so that they are fighting and arguing over things like a small toy jack. There is racism, there is anti homosexual hatred. The most common insults that they say to each other are 'pervert', and sexual things that they have probably done in their past.

They do really well working by themselves right out of a textbook. I think that is all we will do tomorrow. They are not at a point behaviorally where we can talk and discuss things as a class.

Today for this class, two students did about 3-4 problems each. That is all the progress I have to show. I am discouraged.

#### Panthers

The panthers read directly out of the textbook today. They did a good job reading and answering the questions. I wrote all of the answers to the worksheet on the overhead. I have tried to have them work on their own but they will usually ask how to spell almost every word. I cannot help every student spell. Most of them would not work on their own. So we read and answered the questions as a class. I did not have to tell them the answers to any of the problems. After they read and completed the worksheet for about 35 minutes we looked at Lewis Hines photographs of child labor. They really enjoyed it.

Feb 15

#### Ravens

All of the high levels were on a servicing outing today. I did not realize that they would be gone. So out of my class of 14 students I had 4. It would not be worth it to have them do the work that everyone else would need to do. They insisted that they should receive a free day. I don't believe in free days. Instead we looked at a fun powerpoint that shows the History of Architecture that I made. It has about 100 photos of buildings from ancient history to the present. It shows a lot of modern and post-modernism and environmental type buildings. They really enjoyed it. They had lots of questions. They were all actively involved.

#### Trailblazers

Yesterday was so out of control with this class that I provided a simple straightforward assignment that they could all complete without trouble. They would just read out of the sixth-grade US history textbook and ask questions. It is full of good visuals. Two students out of 8 did their work. There were multiple fights. Students had to be taken out of the classroom multiple times. It was out of control. This unit is completely in crisis mode. These poor kids are becoming much more traumatized than receiving the treatment that they need. Its really sad. There is a constant cycle of prejudice and abuse. Each student is an intense pecking order. One student picks on another student because he is Black. He picks on another student for being gay and a transvestite. He picks on another student who is smaller than he. He picks on another student. Often it is really hard to distinguish between blatant bullying and flirting. Much of the tension is a result of repressed sexual desires.

#### Panthers



We went through Lewis Heinz photos. I was trying to help students practice exercising empathy. Using words to imagine what these children were thinking and feeling. One photo showed a girl staring out the window from the factory. Students suggested that maybe she was thinking about going out playing, being able to go home or go to school.

I also wanted them to learn from primary documents. There were a lot of things they learned and asked questions about. There were children smoking and children without shoes. A lot of the children had clothing that was worn out. A few of the children were really young. It seemed to be a very enjoyable and engaging activity.

I should have had them write about it, so that I have something to show from it.

Feb 18

Ravens

Its shocking that I am already so far through this project and I have accomplished so little. Last week was very unproductive. My students did not cover much material since wed was a teacher curriculum day and Friday most of them were on a service outing (they were cleaning at a shelter).

Today my students finished writing their conclusions about the political bosses. They spent time working on it. I think that what has made a difference is I have been passing back their essays and I have been explaining piece by piece how to make them better. This has made it so that they realize that what they write actually matters and they seem to be putting more effort into it.

I made two extra worksheets for this assignment. I added lots of specific questions for students to answer. Writing the source and writing generally about context and close reading did not provide enough scaffolding for my students about what was actually in the document. They were not reading for content. There are problems with this. It is taking agency from the students. It is forcing them to look for exactly what I think is important. But I don't know how else to do this because they were engaging so little with the text previously that this really makes it so they have to read and they have to comprehend at least to a point.

I also used a venn diagram for corroboration. I think this also helps.

For their papers students stated their opinions and backed their opinions with quotations. They often did not explain the quote. They often included very little detail. Some did not even complete the worksheets, but they skipped straight to the persuasive paragraph.

Student 11 wrote:

I Think That George P is A Better Boss. And I Think That Because He Thinks How I Think. Because He Puts His Family And Friends 1<sup>st</sup>. And I Would Do The Same Thing As Him. And I Would Do That Because They Were Always There.

Now Lincoln Is A Corrupt Dud And Sounds Like He Doesn't Think About Their Family.  
And I Think That

Student 13:

I think George Plunkitt is more reliable because with corruption he actually helps the people with it while Lincoln Steffens steals and doesn't give anything back. Plunkitt helps his friends and family. Steffens is stealing from the public because he thinks the bosses are not fair in his work. Steffens accuses bosses of autocracy. Plunkitt may be a little unfair but he isn't as bad as Steffens is now. Steffens is also accusing bosses of stealing Public property. Supposedly both are trying to do good things for the public. But it seems Plunkitt is the only one doing it. Plunkitt to me is the good man.

I think this student really missed the point with Steffens's document. Somehow he missed the idea that Steffens is just a news reporter not a boss and he is not taking any public money.

Student 6

George Plunkitt – I like this guy because he is making money still by helping People and he likes business and that he made money with making graphs. even though he helps his Family and Friends First doesn't make him a Bad man in my eyes.

he says The Irish was born to rule and they're the honest people in the world. Because he is part Irish this is a good opinion. though be The Irish was given protection and prosperity. his one thought is to serve The city which gave him a home.

he would buy The cheaper roof to buy a Nicer one but he would still get the money most of it but he still helped he made it stop raining on the orphanage and made it better and stronger

Tomorrow I think I will need to allow students to debate this. I will let students share their opinions. I am also going to choose three examples, scan them in and I will go over them in front of the class to show what students did well.

Trailblazers

This class just did a worksheet right out of the textbook. For a good portion of the class is was fairly quiet. Every student did at least some work. The last ten minutes some of the students started to act out and it became difficult to maintain control of the class.

Tomorrow I think I will get out the bosses worksheets and start working on it.

### Panthers

They were really good today. We began working on the bosses worksheet. I rewrote the primary document. The document is already modified but I modified it even more in an attempt to help my low functioning students understand it.

Before we read it we did an in-depth role play. I had one girl be a mayor. Then I had the other girls paying taxes. None of them knew what taxes were or what they are for. I explained that the mayor of the city received the taxes and she paid for things like schools, police, sewage, city hall, etc. I then explained that these things were public property. I defined this as property owned by everyone. Then I gave examples of private property. By asking lots of verbal questions I got the sense that they mostly understood what the difference was between private and public property. Finally we were able to start reading with 10 minutes left of class. We read two paragraphs, answered one or two questions and then it was time to line up.

There is never enough time for me. This is because my students need everything right back from the beginning. I have to explain the material at the most elementary level. They have missed lots of school. They often have learning disabilities. The trauma they experience often holds them back from being able to learn and develop.

At the beginning of class I asked what they did over the weekend. A girl said that they had watched 'Disturbia'. I can't imagine showing a movie about a serial killer, to girls that struggle with PTSD. I wrote an email to the therapist that is in charge of the unit. She said staff are supposed to get all movies pre-approved. But this one was not.

One of my students in this class is usually really good and participates and does her work. Today she refused to do any work. Lately when she walks in she will not greet me. She will not talk to me. When I pass her a paper she yells at me. When I ask her what's up she yells "Don't talk to me." It started a week or so ago. She was reading documents in a group with one staff. I was reading documents with the other group. Apparently she could not hear with me talking to the other group. Apparently she did not understand what to do. She started acting out. She broke her pen and smeared ink all over. Since then she will not work or talk to me.

2/19/13

Ravens – Today I complimented the class on writing their essays. I scanned in three papers and used them as positive essays. I thought about using an essay that was *not* good as an example to show the things that were wrong with it – but then I remembered a story someone told me about a teacher using her paper as the bad example and how terrible she felt. I covered up the papers but two of the students announced aloud that it was their paper. They were beaming with pride. They had things to work on still and I shared where they could improve but they were very happy to write papers that were used as positive examples.

I forgot to do a class-wide breakdown of the political boss. I really want to have a discussion maybe even a debate. They have all written papers on it. I was surprised how

many students defended the political boss as not corrupt. I want my students to realize that it is not appropriate to use public money for the benefit of just a few people.

After we read through the essays we talked about US business and entrepreneurs. I had students pick 4 entrepreneurs from about 30 and fill out a worksheet. They seemed to really enjoy this activity. At the end of class I asked about their favorite entrepreneurs – they loved Ray Krock, Sam Walten, Bill Gates, Betty Crocker, etc.

Trailblazers –

Today I made a second attempt with the political boss primary document activity. It started really well. I had the class reading in two separate groups. A staff was reading with one group and I was reading with the other group. But then it became really rough.

Three students went out with some really intense drama. One of the students was really upset because a staff took his rubrics cube. It is often little childish toys or childish conflicts that ignite the drama. Many of these 12-16 year olds simply lack the social skills and maturity. They are delayed by many years. They are fighting about things that most kids fight about when they are ages 6-9.

The drama included shouting, swearing, and threats of violence. When it was over, I let one of the students share about 5 jokes to help us all calm down. Then we started working again. We read through about half of Doc A. There was very little comprehension, class discussion, voluntary participation, etc.

This type of work requires a degree of independent ability, a degree of self control, a degree of good class management, that I don't think this class is ready for.

The students that started acting out – 2/3 refused to engage in groups from the very beginning. They act out without attempting the work. So it was not that they could not do it. I think the problem is that it is simply something new and different. It is something that is outside of their normal routine.

Many of these students struggle with Aspergers. Asperger students love routines. They love things that they are already familiar with. They oppose change.

But it is not just the Asperger students. I think it has to do with being institutionalized. Everything follows regular patterns. There is a strict schedule for everything. The whole system tends to be very inflexible. You may be hungry at 4 pm but you cannot eat until 5:15. This is understandable because the system is so complicated. If you change one things you have to change another hundred other variables – other people are eating at that time, you already have RT scheduled at that time, you have meds that you are supposed to take maybe before or maybe after dinner. In a sense all of the direct care team develop engrained inflexible routines. So do all of the residents.

Students do not want to try things that are new different.

But then again – maybe they are acting out because it is hard and it is a little less structured. During the class after mine they seem a little better. They did not act out this badly until I started doing primary documents. But it could be an infinite number of factors.

Panthers

I showed a powerpoint that I made on the progressive era. It showed all of the technological progress, but then it showed many of things that were still wrong – poverty, bad meat, womens, suffrage, child labor, and how the reformers worked for change. The girls were really good and involved.

FEB 20

Ravens

Today I will review it and then have them write a paragraph explaining: What things did progressives want to change? How did they change society?

What things would you want to change today? How could you change society today?

I believe in using history for moral lessons. This may sound like a political agenda. It is, but a political agenda is unavoidable. Using primary documents, trying to have students learn critical thinking is still a political agenda. Not teaching them any facts is still a political agenda. People are afraid to take moral stances because they think that it too moralistic but moral stances are unavoidable. Decisions are unavoidable. Attempting to refuse to take moral stances is naive, because not taking moral stances *is* a moral stance. There is right and wrong and good and bad in the world. I feel like in the past we made so much effort to teach our children good morals. Even from the moment they were learning to read they were learning valuable moral lessons. Our strength as a nation comes from the good behavior of good people. Today we are so reluctant to do so. As a result it is simply passing off their moral education to Hollywood and pop culture. It is abdicating our responsibility and leaving them to the wolves.

With that in mind I am trying to teach my students agency. They have the power to change things for good or for bad.

Some of the short papers were good and thoughtful. Others did not seem to get it.

Student 5 did not write anything except his name.

Student 14 wrote:

Upton Sinclair – Righting a book.

Jacob R – change pvoerty for the better.

Jane Adams – teach imigrants.

Disorders is what I wald chang.

I would study what causes it & tell evry body about it.

He did not write very much. He usually does not. It seems like it is very hard for him to write because he is usually a good student but he seems to dread writing. But the little bit that he writes is usually well thought out.

Student 1:

Muchworkers were working for clean food. they wanted clean Food no more child labor. Now they have clean Food and no more child labor. No more exshation ithe air. World peace. invent a machen to absorb all the exchastion in the air and make signs to help have world peace.

Student 12:

- 1 trying to change the meat by writing a book  
child labor  
boycott  
stopdrinking  
therightForwomen to Vote
- 2 by taking Picturse
- 3 More freedom for they people that use to be slaves
- 4 being President, invent something

A few students mentioned inventions. My point with the presentation was for them to see that despite all of the inventions there were still some serious problems that needed to be changed. Technology did not solve all of their problems. I guess this was a message that a lot of students did not really get. I don't know what "More freedom for they people that use to be slaves" means. He may be talking about African Americans.

Student 9:

- 1 Meat – By writing a Book or a article In a newspaper
  - 2 Poverty – takeing pictures to show the rich
  - 3 child labor – giving speeches
  - 4 boycaught – going on strike or protesting
- mine – speeches, writings, protests crew, resident consoLe, become president  
mine – poverty easier Jobs, more pay

I often get discouraged. The gap of what I want the to accomplish and understand and the real place of where they are, is so large. There is often so much background understanding that is lacking.

Trailblazers

For the trailblazers I showed the progressive powerpoint. It was rough trying to get through it but I finally did. Students asked questions and participated. They were really engaged when I shared Sinclair's account of sausage production. They made comments about the photographs from Riis and Heinz. When I got through the powerpoint there was five minutes left. I told them to write the two paragraphs. No one wrote. I got frustrated. So I would not let them leave class. I kept going one by one to students telling them to write, giving them hints and explanations about what to write. Most of them refused to write. The ones that did write, wrote very little. Tomorrow I am going to have them write again first thing.

### Panthers

I had this class write first thing. Some of the students were missing. A couple of the students refused to write. Just a few students were left working on their work.

Student 8 wrote:

they wanted to Change the meet So it can be better. lewis Heinz was trying to change child labor So they wont have children working Constantly. News roperts are telling the owners that they need saftey in the enviroment they need sprinklers fire extingusher they wrote books, they took pictures, they wrote speaches and also marched to vote.

till this day I would change that kids should not starve and not get abuse

I would make a movie and explain why abusing and starting in not okay for society.

Student 7:

They where trying to chang the meat child laBor, poor people and women where needed the right to vote.

I want to change to day is grocerystors

Price go Down, air port Price

go Down, movie theater's price go Down, and phonestores go Down. How I could change the price's by righting a letter to the President.

Again this is another example of just the big leap that I want my students to make. Here this student thinks that she can write a letter to the president that could result in the price of everything going down. It reveals the lack of any conception of the presidents limited political power, of the governments role, of how economics works, of private property, etc. Often I feel overwhelmed because where can I even start to explain how these things work. If I try to explain how much will they understand?

FEB 21

Ravens

I started class reviewing the political bosses again. There was still confusion. I really wanted to tell them why Plunkitt's good graft was still corruption and unfair. Instead I bit my tongue and opened it for discussion. I asked who agreed more with Steffens and had students raise their hands and then I called on them.

One student said that Steffens [the news reporter] was stealing more money than Plunkitt [the political boss]. I clarified that Plunkitt was just a newspaper reporter and not stealing any money. One student made the point that you cannot believe everything that reporters said. But he said that this one seemed like he was telling the truth. I asked why he believed Steffens. Another student made the point that Plunkitt was trying to defend himself and so he is more likely to paint a good picture. He may not have disclosed everything that he was doing.

Then I asked students that agreed with Plunkitt to raise their hands and share their opinion.

A student made the point that he liked Plunkitt better because he was helping his friends and family. Another student made a point that it was not fair to everyone else that wanted a job but could not get one just because they were not his friend or family member.

I thought it was remarkable that they were able to reach good conclusions without me having to tell them exactly what to think. They were able to exercise their own judgment and agency.

After this I passed out a new document analysis project – its about the social gospel women like Jane Addams. The investigative questions is what attitude to progressive reformers have towards immigrants. In one account Addams comes across judgmental prim and prudish. She did not want youth immigrants to be dancing in halls.

In other accounts it is very touching and impressive the good things that Addams was able to accomplish.

Students got right to work. I made a good worksheet for this. It is much better organized. I decided to take out one of the 4 documents however and then I accidentally printed the one that I meant to leave out and accidentally left out the one I wanted to be put in.

I think 3 documents are great. The more documents about an issue that we have, the more angles that we are able to capture.

I used the tools – by asking sourcing, context, & close reading and then I included more questions about specific things. For example I asked why she uses the word 'defiant' in



describing one of the youth (I think she was trying to create an image of these youth as being disrespectful).

Students got the first document done and they were partway through the second document.

### Trailblazers

I made another attempt at writing. Some students said that they did not know what to write so I reviewed some of the slides again with them. It took about 35 minutes for students to write a few sentences and share their sentences with the rest of the class and for us to move on. Here are some samples of what they wrote:

After showing slides about the progressive era the questions are:

- What things did they want to change? How did they change society?
- What things would **you** want to change about society today?
- How could **you** change society today?

Student 7 wrote:

To change The society is to make Them work to vote and for women to change the factors No fight or start crime. Chang ine poverty, child labor

If I can change the society to change the society is to prarticipate. to how they live. They took pictures they went on Strike. The rote books.

Student 3 wrote:

What they wanted to change about society is that the music would attract people, cars are cheap and they had started building skyscrapers

The things I would want to change about our society is help orphans, help the homeless people, build more homes, keep the city clean, and I can do this by getting help from supporters.

I think this shows how the student was engaged in class about the 10-15 minutes when I was talking about the new modern inventions. My point was that despite these new inventions, there were still major problems with society at the time that progressives had to change. I think I need to change this student's seat. He sits in the corner – and it is very difficult for him to see the screen and he is usually not paying attention.

FEB 22

Ravens

I began the analysis on Progressive Social Reformers today.

We reviewed the things that progressives were trying to reform.

I thought this would be one of the easiest analysis projects but it has required a lot of work with my students. I have had to explain a lot to them. I don't think it has a lot to do with them. I think it has more to do with their 'unit'. The unit is the living quarters and the peers that they live with. The boys unit has been struggling a lot. The last couple weeks they have been one of my best classes, but a lot of them have lost their levels and are on refocus.

[This is as low as they can go. They have lost all privileges at refocus and then they have nothing to lose. Residents actually enjoy being on refocus because it is free license to do anything with no negative consequences.

Sometimes staff can still coerce them in other ways. They will bag up all of their stuff. They will provide extra privileges like movies and pizza parties. They will not allow them to eat in the cafeteria. If they are really bad they can keep them in a timeout room, but that requires a doctor's order. That is a recent development only in the last 6 months. Previously staff would frequently force kids into the timeout room for breaking rules even if they were not being an actual danger to someone. The timeout room is a room with hard walls hard floor and hard ceiling with no door.

The result is that the residents never learn to make good choices on their own. They only make good choices because there is an immediate positive or negative consequence. When the point system is not in place, or when they are on 'the outs' or when someone is not constantly watching them 24 hours a day, then they go right back to doing whatever they feel like doing.

This is a reflection of how there are so many variables that are completely out of my control. I never know what kids will arrive, or how my kids will be acting when they arrive.

A student that is usually really sharp kept asking for help. Once he asked when I was mid sentence helping another peer – I continued finishing my sentence and he got upset because I was ignoring him.

Many students agreed with Doc A when Jane Addams was talking about the dance halls. I explained the concept of self-righteous as a person that thinks that they more righteous or better than others, a person that wants everyone to have their same standards. Some students totally agreed with the idea that these dance halls were a terrible and dangerous influence on the youth.

On Doc C all of the groups that I talked with struggled with the concept of “Americanizing”. The whole document was clearly connected to this idea. Jane Addams was praising American institutions for changing the culture of Italian immigrants. From the first two documents Jane Addams comes across as morally and culturally prejudiced. She is promoting a type of cultural imperialism. This is the cardinal sin of today, yet my students failed to see it.

They struggled with the last document – D. I had to explain lots of concepts in it.

I think a lot more will come out in the class discussion and in the essay.

### Trailblazers

It was a better day. We went over the political bosses papers again. Students made progress. Most of them finished doc A. I had to help them find almost every answer. They really struggled to get the concepts.

A couple of students acting out left class and the whole class was able to focus much better after that.

### Panthers

Class was productive today but it was also boring. We got through Document B. Many of the girls understood what was going on. They shared great answers and then I wrote their answers on the board for the rest to copy. Some of them are at such a low level that they need to copy answers.

FEB 25

### Ravens

We reviewed the documents today getting a birds eye view. Talking with the class the students really did not like Doc A. I was not neutral in the way I presented the documents or the questions that I asked. Students seemed to really understand Doc C. One student from an Hispanic background, who does not speak Spanish but who is trying to learn Spanish shared the insight that “They learn to work hard in America but they also lose a lot of their culture.” A lot of the students began writing their essay. One group messed around the whole period and only answered one question on the worksheet.

### Trailblazers

It was another really rough day for the trailblazers. Very few of them understand the material. Many of them are writing really random things for the answers to the worksheets. I tried to do a role-play during which the students stop listening after a

couple of minutes. I tell them to look up at me and I wait. I don't know why the material just does not seem to be processing.

While I was trying to explain to one student what Plunkitt meant by honest graft, he got really angry and tried to flip over the table. He is a big kid. He left and cooled down.

Throughout the class period there were multiple times that kids were provoking each other, posturing each, one student was shoved, lots of threats, a couple cases of posturing, there were three students that left at different points to cool down and then they came back.

In this type of traumatic hateful bullying atmosphere it is really hard for students to focus, learn, and for their brains to calm down and come out of fight or flight mode.

#### Panthers

We read Doc C together as a class. It took the whole period but I felt like they understood it. They answered a lot of questions on their own. After a student answered a question I wrote it on the overhead for everyone. This had the negative affect of often getting everyone involved because they did not have to think for themselves. Often there was about 50-30% participation in this small class. Once it was written everyone else would write it down.

#### FEB 26 – computer lab, essay

#### Ravens

I showed my students how to open a word document, how to align right to write their name and date in the top right-hand corner. I showed them how to write the central investigative question in the center, and then to begin writing on the left hand side.

I briefly reviewed the 3 documents that they are using again. I began the paper by making a thesis statement and showed how to make quotes and how to explain the quotes. Students began writing with about 20 minutes left of class. It seemed to me that they worked really well. Some however at the end of class only had their name date and title. It took them 20 minutes of working to accomplish that. Many students spent their time changing the fonts and font sizes. As a consequence some of their papers are written cursive or old English. I decided to let it slide. One step at a time.

#### Trailblazers

This was the best class that I have had with this group in months. They were all so excited to be in the computer lab. They quietly sat down. In the computer lab I was able to make it so everyone could see my screen on their computer. We reviewed the documents again. One student asked what corruption was. We have already done two

class role-plays on corruption, but the class was really disruptive during those times. This time I used the program 'paint'. I drew little stick figures, and government buildings to show an example of corruption. No one interrupted me. It really helped that each student only had to look straight ahead at their own screen. I asked lots of questions and they were clearly listening and most understood this time. I began an example of a paper by having a thesis statement and using a quotation to support my thesis paper. They worked well the last ten minutes of class quietly and independently.

#### Panthers

I reviewed the documents with this group and showed them how to begin an essay. As soon as I finished two girls walked in late from individual therapy sessions. They both demanded to know what to do. I tried to explain while other girls at the same time were asking for help. Some girls were asking for help on how to spell every word. They refused to try to spell it out.

Most of these girls completed their name, date, the title, and maybe one or a partially completed sentence.

FEB 27

#### Ravens

Many of my best students were missing today. They were out skiing. Two days I also just found out that I will need to do a training on Friday morning. This means that some of these boys will have missed two days to write this paper. This will hurt the quality of the paper. This shows how education is constantly undermined in treatment center.

Today at the beginning of class I explained that a thesis was “the central idea of a paper that you are trying to prove” I showed a small paragraph that I had written with my thesis. I emphasized how all the evidence needed to prove that the thesis was correct. This took about ten minutes. While I was explaining this I had control of all the computers so they could only see my computer screen on their computer screen.

I then went around checking on thesis statements. Most students did not have thesis statements. A few students got upset when I gave them suggestions including a thesis statement. A few students just had a bunch of quotes from the documents with very few of their own words and no central idea that tied the ideas together. They were offended that they would have to change things to their paper.

At the end of class I explained the process of making a rough draft and then making a second draft and a final draft. I explained that it is normal to write, then re-write, then re-write again.

Trailblazers,

Today was not quite as good as yesterday but it was still a really good day. Most students worked the duration of class. Afterwards I had them all print off their drafts. I will edit all their drafts today and give them back to them tomorrow.

#### Panthers

A few of the girls have been refusing class. But one of my students that has been acting out, sleeping, and refusing to communicate for the last two weeks has suddenly snapped back to life. She worked on her paper all day. She allowed me to help her.

Feb 28

#### Ravens

A few of the boys were missing class, and a few others that had missed class the day before were here today. It is often 3-4 students almost everyday in a class of 14. That's about a 20% absent rate everyday. I wonder how that compares to mainstream classrooms. [this would be another topic that I could research – the amount of absents in school]

I emphasized what a thesis was again, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. They did not understand very well. I should have shown them an essay outline from the very beginning. I thought by demonstrating it on my screen and with everyone watching that would be sufficient. But then again I like the idea of them jumping into the essay and then learning piece by piece as they go. I think this way they retain it better, because they are immediately able to apply it.

I had all of them print off their papers today. I will correct them all give them back and then have them do a final draft next week.

#### Trailblazers

This was a rough class. About three of the students could not find their papers saved on their computers, or they saved it with a password and now they could not access it. One student insisted that the computer got his password wrong or else somebody must have changed his password.

A few of the students refused to work at all. One because he just did not get it. During this class I felt especially disappointed. I realized that maybe this whole endeavor was a bad idea. The ideas and the work are just too advanced for them. Having to think and write and analyze is simply too complicated. With all of my worksheets it was not enough scaffolding and assistance. They were acting out too much. Their minds were constantly in fight or flight mode. They have very little self-efficacy and tolerance for difficult things. They would easily get angry and frustrated. They would start acting out. This would get the whole class angry and frustrated. Very quickly I would have a class completely out of control. I passed back papers providing feedback. I should have done a better job at praising. As soon as some students saw my feedback they shutdown

and they started writing things on their computer screens like “I’m” stupid” and “I can’t do anything right”.

This requirement to provide work that is ultra simple is sad. It limits them to be challenged enough to grow. But their low self-efficacy and their explosive behavior necessitate this.

#### Panthers

I went over in detail an outline of an essay. I had them follow a simplified format of: thesis, supporting argument, supporting argument, conclusion(including restatement of thesis and the supporting arguments). The girls seemed to get this really well. We did our own essay on ‘America is special’. They suggested that America is special because it has freedom and we don’t judge.

I believe in nationalism and positive ideals. I promote such essays as what America should and could be.

March 1, 2013

It turns out that I had to go to a training. I missed my first two classes. The training was very helpful. We talked about how restraints have gone down a lot every year for the last five years. When I first arrived here, I was involved in multiple restraints a month. We are trained in specific ways to do the restraints so that the residents nor the worker is injured. Restraints in the past were often used as a punishment. Staff would say things like “You better . . . or I’ll PRT you [put you in a restrain].” It was a really poor, non-therapeutic, traumatic environment. It is interesting though when you are part of culture and everyone has a certain mindset, to just think that it is okay or that it is not as bad as it really is. No one really knew what they were doing. There was really poor training & assistance. Lots of the restraints were on the floor or on the wall, which were illegal, but we did not know because that is how we were trained. The person that trained us just decided to add his own modifications to it.

I dropped off work for the classes on the unit. They were watching movies and hanging out. They are usually watching movies. I am convinced that most of the time in most treatment centers, if they are not in school or in therapy then they are watching movies. In a very way the most influential force in treatment centers is Hollywood. We try to teach our residents to not be violent and then in much of their spare time they are shown graphic glorified violence in movies like Taken 2.

I dropped off a primary document on Mexican American immigrants with a worksheet. I will be surprised if I get back more than a couple.

#### Trailblazers

I had this class do just straight textbook and worksheet today. They came to class really rowdy and out of control. I had my guitar out and I started playing softly while I had something for them to immediately get to work on without talking or requiring

interaction from anyone. Again it is sad that I have to do this. I believe that is less effective way to teach. But I do not have any choice. Talking as a class, working in groups, analyzing documents, gets them so agitated. I'll keep trying though but I can only try a little at a time, otherwise I will lose my sanity.

March 6

I provided one more computer lab day for students to work on their essays because so many students had missed multiple days because of skiing outings and because of my training. It just so happened this was another ski day. Most of my best students in the ravens class were missing again. My other two classes worked really well today. For the trailblazers class I provided an alternative assignment for students that finished early.



## Appendix B: Student Persuasive Essays

Ravens student 4

I think she is paling a herd game with the young immigrants are familiarity.

Raven student 11

Jane Addams thinks that immigrants are 'defiant' and she thinks their dancing is 'frivilous' and irresponsible. She thinks the dance halls are bad because they just go there to meet and hang with girls and other stuff innappropriately. She also think that there never should be dance halls in the first place because she thinks they are stupid. After the reformers started to think it wasn't right they dcided to make different things like amusement parks and stuff like that.

Jane Addmas is talking about an Italian girl and her mother how they moved to america and how the douaghter is gonna help her mother out by teaching her how to work things that she is learning how to use for example they would always have to take their bread into town but now all they have to do is cook it in the oven that they have in their house or where ever they are.

Ravens Student 14

Jane Addams was inconsiderate not giving people the credit they need and rude.

In one document from 1909 Jane Addams' attitude was negative and rude. She said the dance halls were filled with kids that acted "defiantly". She was rude by not considering how they feel.

In another document from 1910 Jane Addams' attitude was rude. She gave them life skills. She said "the public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing forces." That means they are taking all the credit for them being American.

In the last document from 1950 at the Christmas party Hilda thought that Jane Addams was respecting her and her culture. If she respected her culture she would have played Jewish music too. She basically said that they should be Christian.

In conclusion she was judgmental. She thought that the American way is better than their way. That is wrong because American means that you should be free to live out your religion and life the way you want. That was not the case a hundred years ago.

#### Ravens #12

Jane Addams was mean to the immigrants .

In document A Jane Addams attitude was negative because she tried to stop the dance hall activities because they were staying up to late. I think that the dance halls should not be shut down because they should just be at a different time.

Also in another document which is document C it was also negative because the Americans were trying to make a newish person a American person by teaching them how to cook and how to raise a child and sew

in document D which was positive it was positive because a newish person got to go to a Christmas party just because she was in America.

In conclusion I agree with the last document only is the only one that looked fair to me. The other two look unfair to me because it seems mean in a way.

Thesis I think Jane Addams was mean to the immigrants

1. she was trying to make an Italian person become American my reason is that she was teaching her how to do a lot of stuff in American ways like taking care of a child or two

Jane Addams was also trying to find a way to cut off dance party's . I got evidence because she said that kids were staying up too late.

In conclusion I think that Jane Addams was mean because she cut off dance halls and was teaching a person how to do stuff in American ways .

#### Ravens #13

### **JANE ADDAMS**

**Jane Addams thinks that these teens should not be dancing alone without adult supervision. In one excerpt Jane Addams' 'The Spirit of youth and the city streets' from 1909 she talks about how at the time dance halls became a popular form of recreation. But they became inappropriate so they moved them. She says "As more young immigrants moved from farms in the country to urban areas, dance halls became a popular form of recreation." Jane Addams is a person with her own opinions and my opinion is that she should just leave them be it's not a huge deal that young people are dancing together. I think she may have her point to some people but to the teens who go to the dance halls including my opinion think that is not a good idea.**

### **JANE ADDAMS**

**Excerpt from Jane Addams book, 'Twenty Years in Hull House', {1910} this passage comes from a chapter called 'Immigrants and their children'. An Italian girl who has had lessons cooking "Jane Addams" will help her mother to connect the entire family with her home made American food that she will be cooking herself. It is not that Jane Addams hates the dance halls it's just she does not like that there is no adult supervising.**

### **JANE ADDAMS**

**In conclusion Jane Addams doesn't seem like the person who cares for immigrants. I think she may be being unfair also with why she wants to have dance halls moved. It is not just because of no adult supervising but also because she may be a little judgmental about kids being able to do things that she thinks only grown ups can do.**

### **Panthers student 8**

**Jane Addams cared about the immigrants but she also judged them.**

For example, Jane Addams thought that the immigrants were "frivolous and irresponsible" because the girls and boys were dancing and she thought that was disrespectful. She still cares about them but she still thinks it is disrespectful.

In another example, an immigrant girl learned how to cook and sew at a public school. Jane Addams thought it was a good change for the immigrants because they could be wealthy. She said "The public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing forces." I think it's not good because they would forget about their culture.

Jane Addams cares about the immigrants. She had a party and invited all the immigrants to the party including Jewish people. Jane Addams loved them and would do anything for them. She would teach them how to read and write and how to speak English.

Jane Adams cared about the immigrants but she also judged them. She judged them about the dance halls. She also judged about the change in their life. What I have read Jane Addams is a really caring for her children seems like a kind lady and protective over her boys and girls.

#### Panthers student 5

jane Addams thinks that the dance halls are inappropriate for youner teensagers it can be not approriate and not safe when they dance and she called their dances whicked Jane Addams thought that it would be good for the immigrants to learn about americans.

The immigrants should have to learn to do sewing and they should learn how to bake bread for there familys. Jane Addams thought that they should give up there culture and that they should speak americans language and she thought tehy would forget there and she

Jane Addams thought it would not be safe for the immigrants to go out on the streets after midnight because they could get killed or they could be kidnapped and I think she was trying to help the immigrants by giving the immigrants a christmas parties

#### Trailblazers #7

Political bosses were corrupt. No political bosses were corrupt. I think that all they want was money. So they would hire someone who as a lot of money. For example: \$10,000,000 the mayor would hire that person. Lincoln Steffens used bribes to get his ways. "Steffens said that we are fear patriotic.". George plunkitt has been reading a book by Steffens on The Shame of the Cities. The citizens that tehy all want money. Steffens says that he's all for money. money is all about getting a job. For example: the mayor would pick the person with a lot of money. So if I had \$1000,000.000,000,000,000 the mayor would hire me for \$200,000,000. Orphanage is a place were kids that don't have a family or a home.

#### Ravens #6

What were the attitudes of Progressive social reformers towards

## immigrants?

### **Jane Addams had a negative view of immigrants.**

Jane Addams thinks that immigrants are “defiant” and she thinks their dancing is “frivolous” and irresponsible. She thinks that dance halls are irresponsible because they just go there to meet girls and to dance with each other inappropriately. She thinks that there should be no dance halls at all.

After reformers found these dance halls inappropriate they started making entertainment for youth like amusement parks.

Jane Addams is talking about an Italian girl and her mother how they moved to America and how the daughter is gonna help her mother out by teaching her how to work things that she is learning how to use for example they would always have to take their bread into town but now all they have to do is cook it in the oven that they have in their house or where ever they are.

Trailblazer #3

February 26, 2013

Were political bosses corrupt?

**All political bosses were corrupt.** For example, they were bribing too much. George Plunkitt said “ I made my money in politics (by being elected), but at the same time, I served the organization (helped people) and got more big improvements for New York City than an other living man”. He also said or talked about “honest graft” and “dishonest graft”. In 1905 he said the Irish have one reason why they are more honest than many Americans have been because the Irish are thankful for their prosperity, and protection from the Government. They also came to America to because they were being oppressed in Ireland.

In a speech George Plunkitt about how Steffen means well, *the shame of the cities*, but reformers don't know how to make a distinction. Lincoln Steffen is the reason why the political bosses were corrupt was because they spent too much money on other people ,or perhaps, himself, and they were trying to build houses or homes for some of the orphanages. Unlike the Irish, they were not in love with there country as more as he did.



## Appendix C: Student Reflections

March 8, 2013

Reflections

RAVENS

Student 13

I just think I'm learning a good amount

I'm able to help people that don't get questions and I'm able to answer more questions easier

If you're cheating or copying you won't learn anything

After reading things in the document it's easier to answer and help others

In a group: most of the time I don't get what people talk about when I'm getting side tracked

I'm able to hear different points of views

Documentaries: It's interesting and fun to watch and I'm still able to remember most of the things after

Textbooks

Not that well

Graphic novels Pretty well mostly when I read it myself

Best way: Discussing over facts and taking turns reading over history facts watching old history movies and going over it.

Playing history games

Student 12

Analyzing Documents: I know this subject is too hard for me

Strengths: You learn history

Weaknesses: too hard  
 When I'm by myself I'm not really good, in a group I'm better  
 When we talk as a class I don't know what to say  
 Lectures: not that well because I slack at taking notes  
 Documentaries: nothing  
 Textbooks: a little bit  
 Graphic Novels: nothing  
 Best history: reading textbooks

Student 4  
 Best way to learn history: words

Student 14  
 Analyzing Documents:  
 They explain it better than someone telling it  
 It was because I got to hear the people's words that were there.  
 In a group: People messed around so I barely got anything done  
 As a class: Well because they were explained by someone that understood the documents.  
 Lectures: little because you talk too fast in lectures  
 Documentaries: a lot because I'm a visual & hearing learner  
 Textbooks: A good amount because I go at my pace  
 Graphic Novels: A good amount I get to learn by myself  
 Best way to learn history: Documentaries. I learn visually & hearing stuff.

Student 11  
 Analyzing Documents: I'm learning something But it's not very fun enough to stick in my mind  
 Strengths: get the straight facts  
 Weaknesses: not so much fun  
 In a group: I like to learn something by a special way so it sticks  
 Lectures: not very well because it's boring  
 Documentaries: very good because they are visually interesting  
 Textbooks: nothing because I hate reading for learning I'm a visual learner  
 Graphic Novels: good because they have images  
 Best history: history videos because I think that that's the way that keeps me interested

Student 6  
 Analyzing Documents: I don't really like reading I have a focusing problem, It is kinda boring but I can get it done  
 Weaknesses: focusing  
 In a group: Because like reading sucks so I only learn it in the moment  
 As a class: I have a focusing problem  
 Lectures: not that much  
 Documentaries: good a lot kinda just a good amount  
 Textbooks: a little  
 Graphic Novels: a little



Best history: watching videos, talking about it  
 I rather watch videos talking about it stres me head aches makes me tired home work  
 sucks because we dont have any time really to do it

## TRAILBLAZERS

### Student 3

Analyzing Documents: I get it but then again I dont get it,  
 Strengths: understanding what I am reading about  
 Weaknesses: not understanding what I am reading about  
 In a group: its me to analyze all the information  
 As a class: cause my teachers explain about a documentary facts  
 Lectures: it helps you learn stuff  
 Documentaries: it explains alot of opinions and facts  
 Textbooks: well I dont learn anything because not all true about the history  
 Graphic Novels: the graphic Novels are good because it shows how the Americans went  
 on a voyage  
 Best history: the best way to learn is to listen to your teachers & notebooks & graphic  
 novels and documentaries

### Student 7

Analyzing Documents: its stupid  
 Strengths: boring  
 Weaknesses:nothing  
 Lectures:nothing  
 Best way to learn history history: Bull shit Fuck you

## PANTHERS

too much writing  
 Lectures: not too much  
 Documentaries: same  
 Textbooks: a lot  
 Graphic Novels: a lot  
 Best history: by reading and computers

### student 7

its really stupid  
 boring

### student 8

Yes I learn a lot [reading documents] because Im usually the one reading it, it is okay  
 the good things are that were learning about new stories about people  
 the bad things are that we have to learn about it everyday  
 because they explain what happen in the past and who they are  
 well I kina like it but not all

lectures: i think its good because we can write our own notes and paragrphas  
documentaries: because were acually seeing [what] there doing  
textbooks: its good so we can understand it better  
novels: its good because we visualize and read what there  
watching videos playing like acting  
idk I like it but there so many subjects I like

Student 5

no boring no none